# DESCENDING STORIES

SHOWA GENROKU RAKUGO SHINJU

# 昭和元禄落語心中

1

HARUKO KUMOTA

# DESCENDING STORIES

SHOWA
GENROKU
RAKUGO
SHINJU

Haruko Kumota

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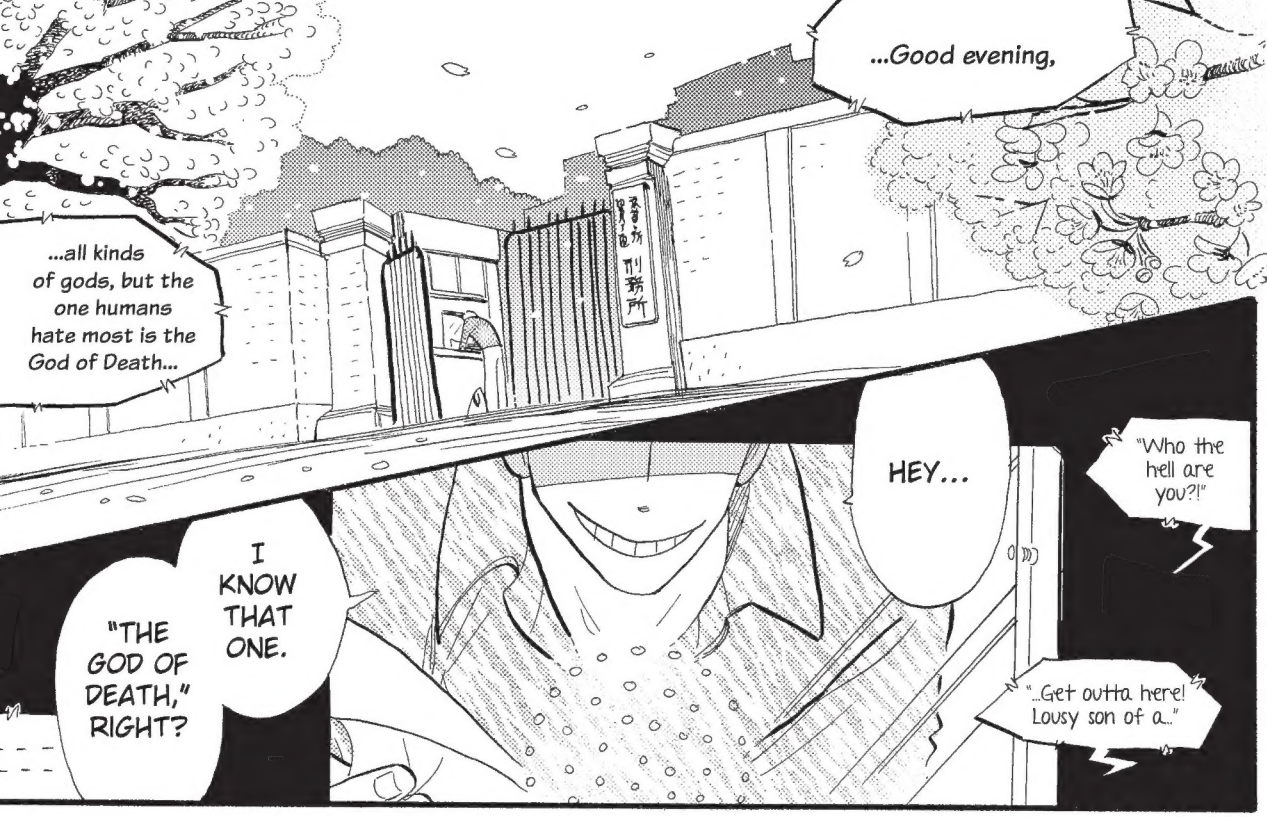

...Good evening,
...all kinds of gods, but the one humans hate most is the God of Death...
HEY...
"Who the hell are you?!"
"...Get outta here! Lousy son of a..."
I KNOW THAT ONE.
"THE GOD OF DEATH," RIGHT?

*Note: This is a 'magic spell' chanted in the context of the rakugo story.

*Note:
*Yose* is the traditional term for the places where rakugo is performed. Basically, a rakugo theater.

NO ONE TO TAKE YOU IN, WAS THAT IT?
NO FAMILY. NOWHERE TO GO, EVEN NOW. RIGHT?
SERVED OUT YOUR FULL SENTENCE, HUH?
A MODEL PRISONER, BUT NEVER PAROLED ...

PEOPLE WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.

IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE GOT ANYTHING TO LOSE.

YEAH.

ARE YOU OKAY, SON?

OR A PLACE TO STAY?

BEFORE YOU EVEN FIND A JOB

WHAT, THAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

A YOSE?!

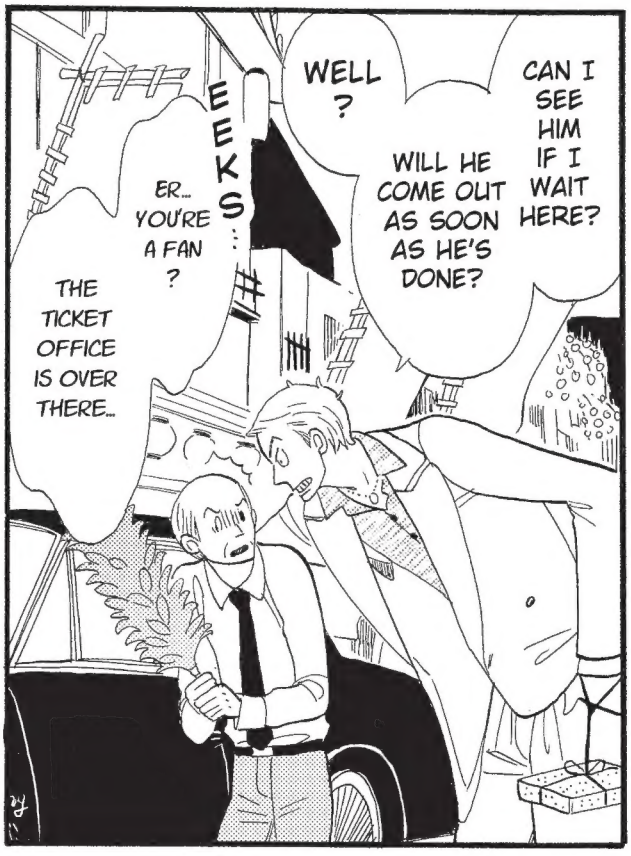
THAT'S WHO *YOSE* ARE FOR, RIGHT?

# DESCENDING STORIES

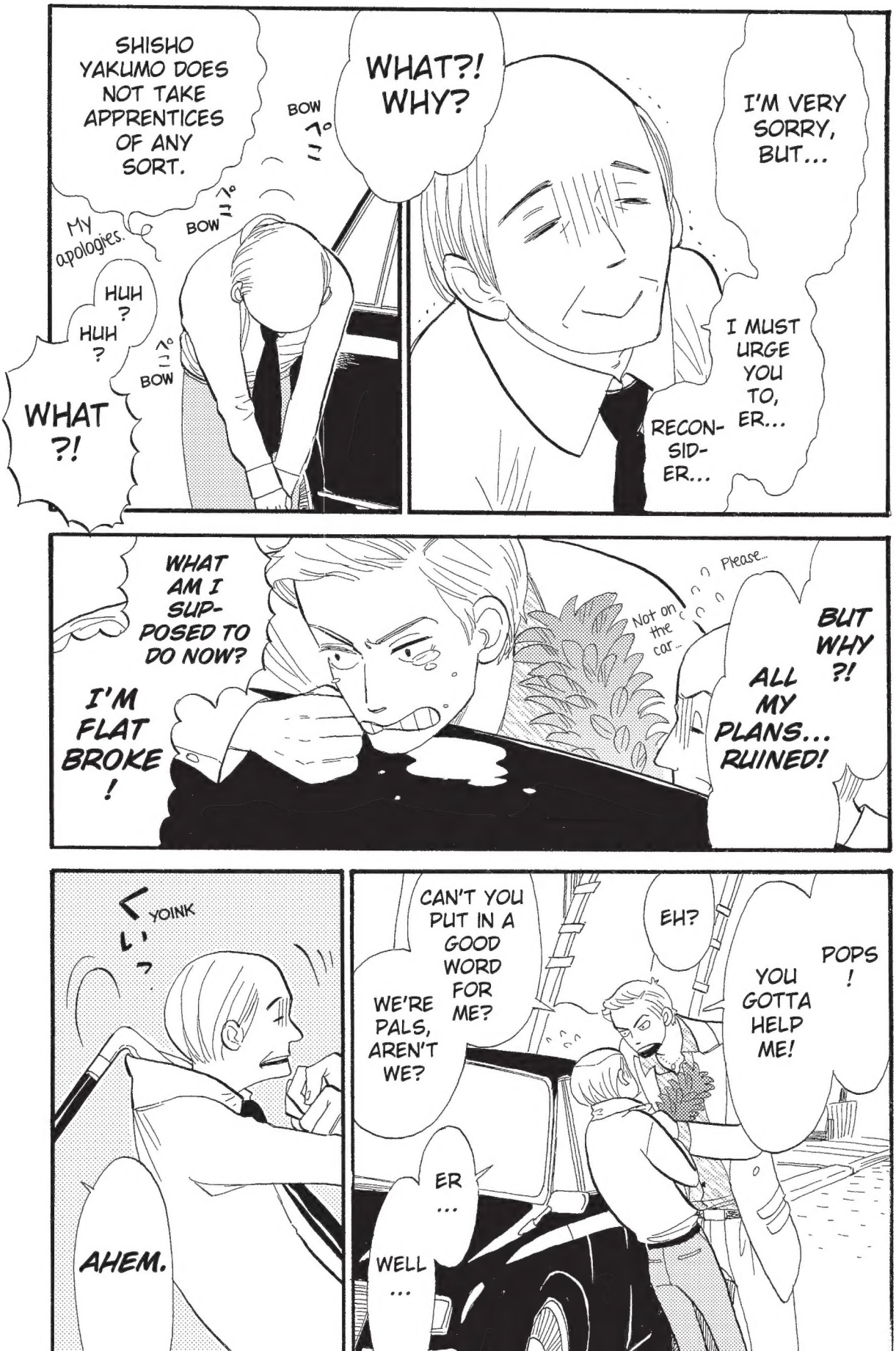
YOTARO'S ODYSSEY: 1

SHOWA GENROKU RAKUGO SHINJU

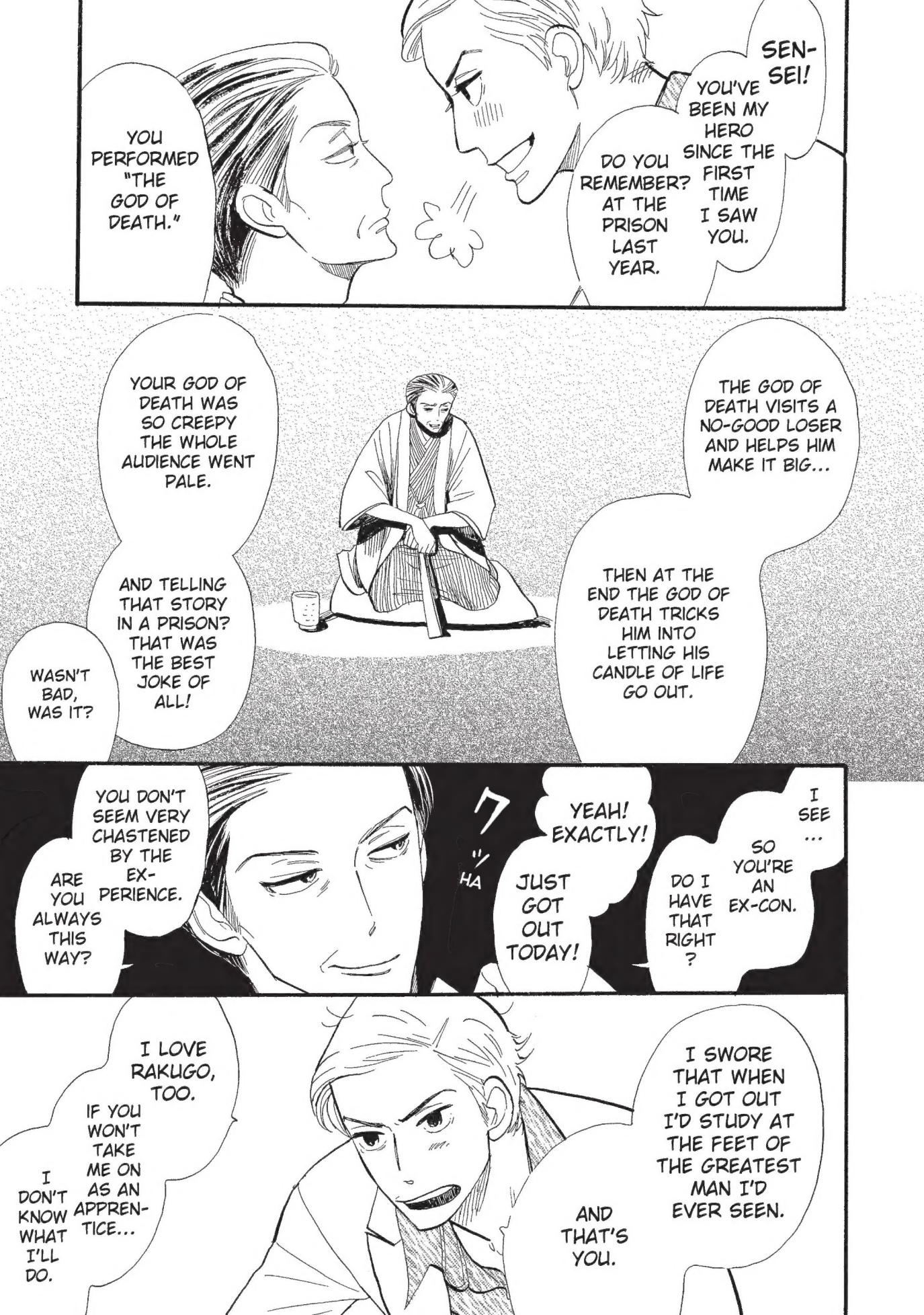
*Note: *Sensei*, literally "teacher," is also used as an honorific for great masters of the arts.

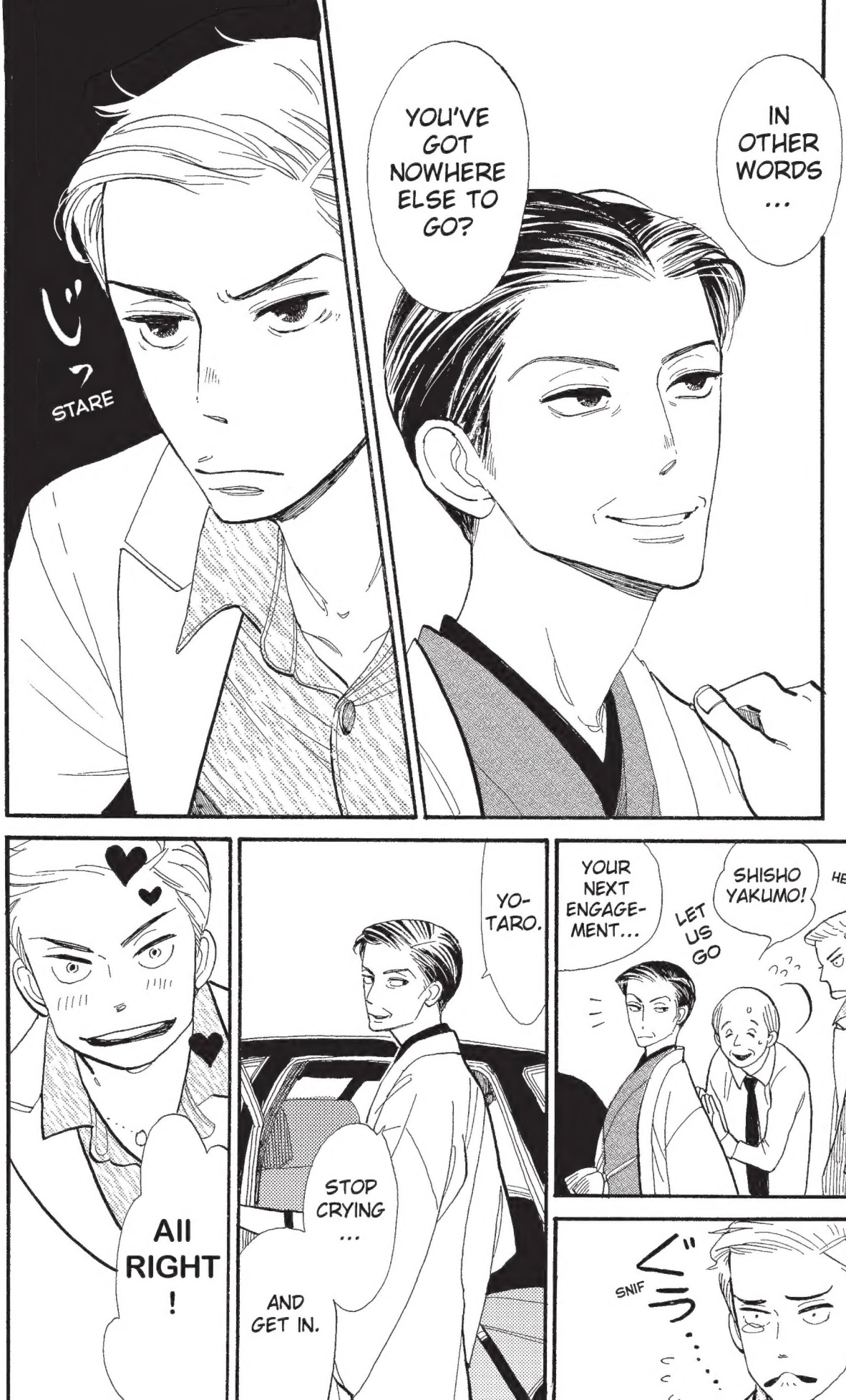


NOT EVEN A CROWBAR COULD PRY ME AWAY!
UNTIL HE TAKES ME ON AS A STUDENT...
I'M NOT GOING ANY-WHERE.
LISTEN, IT WASN'T EASY TO TRACK SENSEI DOWN.

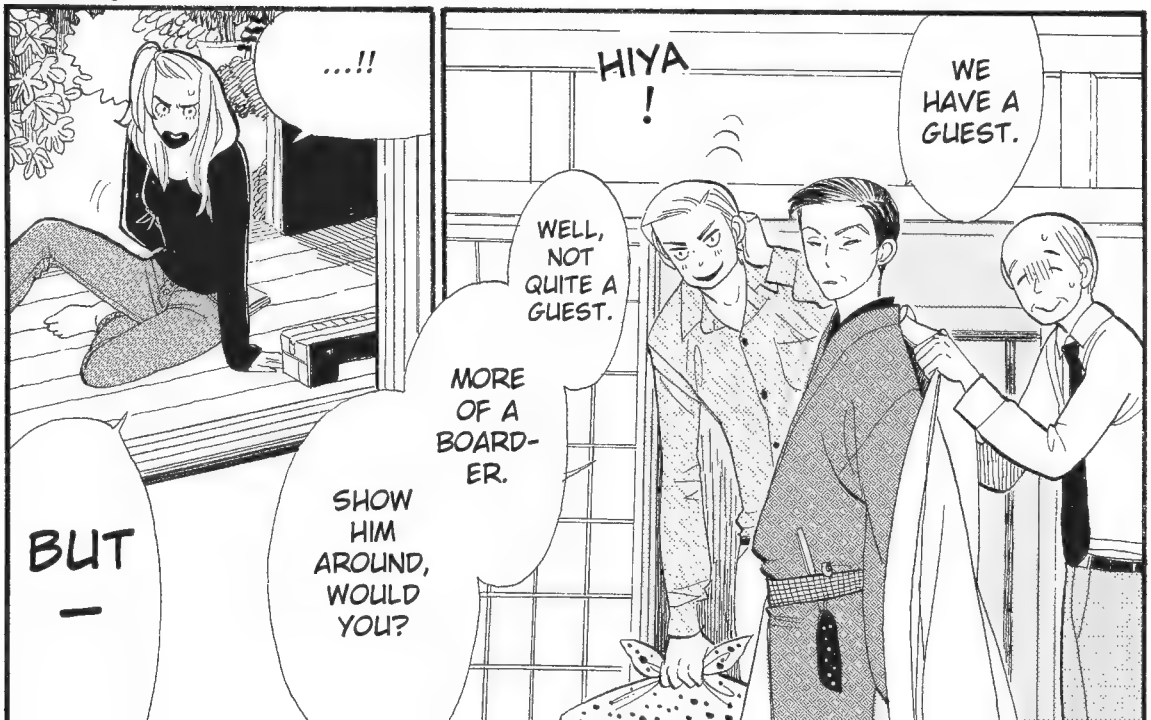

I'M VERY SORRY, BUT...
I MUST URGE YOU TO, ER... RECON-SID-ER...
WHAT?! WHY?
SHISHO YAKUMO DOES NOT TAKE APPRENTICES OF ANY SORT.
BOW
BOW
BOW
My apologies.
HUH? HUH?
WHAT?!
BUT WHY?!
ALL MY PLANS... RUINED!
Please...
Not on the car...
WHAT AM I SUP-POSED TO DO NOW?
I'M FLAT BROKE!
POPS! YOU GOTTA HELP ME!
EH?
CAN'T YOU PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR ME?
WE'RE PALS, AREN'T WE?
ER... WELL...
YOINK
AHEM.

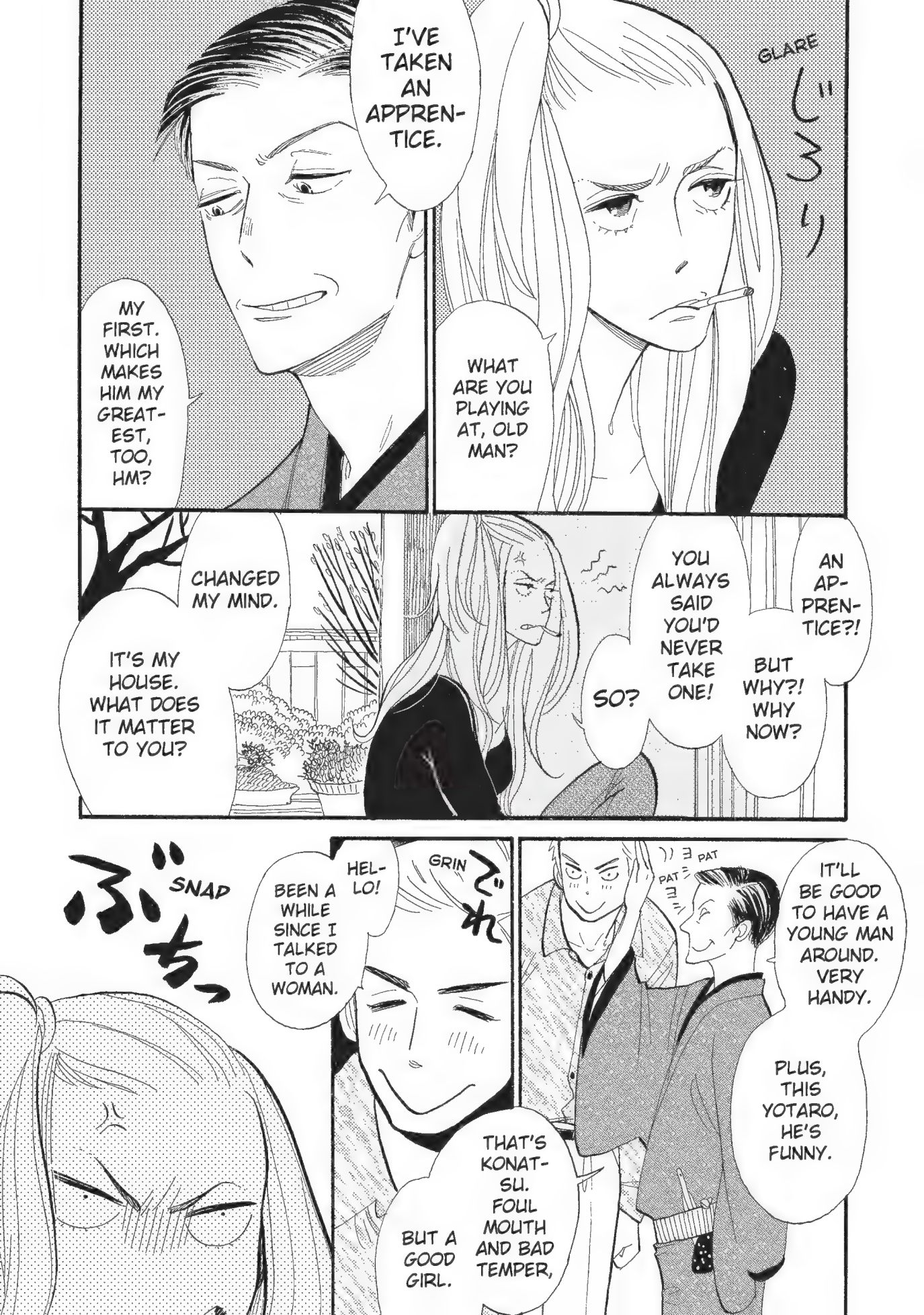
I HOPE MY DRIVER ISN'T MAKING ANY TROUBLE?
YOU LOOK TO ME LIKE A "CONNECTED" MAN...
IF THERE'S A PROBLEM, I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
HM?
SEN-SEI!
MY SEN-SEI!
むぎゅっ
GLOMP
IT'S SO GOOD TO MEET YOU AT LAST!
MA-TSU-DA.
WHO IS THIS YOTARO?


SEN-SEI!
YOU'VE BEEN MY HERO SINCE THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU.
DO YOU REMEMBER? AT THE PRISON LAST YEAR.
YOU PERFORMED "THE GOD OF DEATH."
THE GOD OF DEATH VISITS A NO-GOOD LOSER AND HELPS HIM MAKE IT BIG...
THEN AT THE END THE GOD OF DEATH TRICKS HIM INTO LETTING HIS CANDLE OF LIFE GO OUT.
YOUR GOD OF DEATH WAS SO CREEPY THE WHOLE AUDIENCE WENT PALE.
AND TELLING THAT STORY IN A PRISON? THAT WAS THE BEST JOKE OF ALL!
WASN'T BAD, WAS IT?
I SEE ...
SO YOU'RE AN EX-CON.
DO I HAVE THAT RIGHT?
YEAH! EXACTLY!
JUST GOT OUT TODAY!
HA
YOU DON'T SEEM VERY CHASTENED BY THE EX-PERIENCE.
ARE YOU ALWAYS THIS WAY?
I SWORE THAT WHEN I GOT OUT I'D STUDY AT THE FEET OF THE GREATEST MAN I'D EVER SEEN.
AND THAT'S YOU.
I LOVE RAKUGO, TOO.
IF YOU WON'T TAKE ME ON AS AN APPREN-TICE...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO.


IN OTHER WORDS ...
YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE ELSE TO GO?
じっ STARE
YOUR NEXT ENGAGE-MENT...
LET US GO
SHISHO YAKUMO!
HEY
YO-TARO.
STOP CRYING ...
AND GET IN.
All RIGHT !
SNIF
グラ

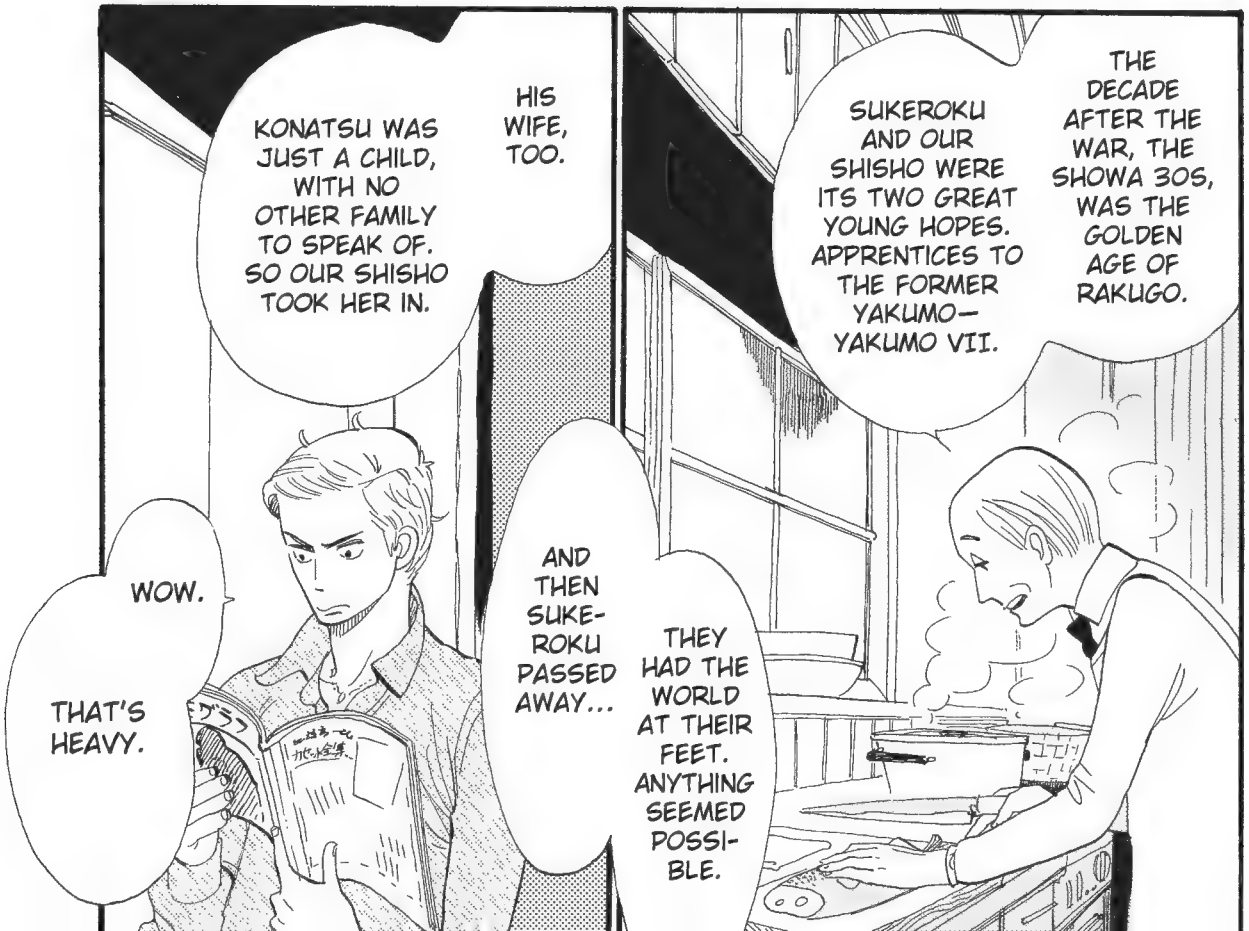
*Best Of Rakugo

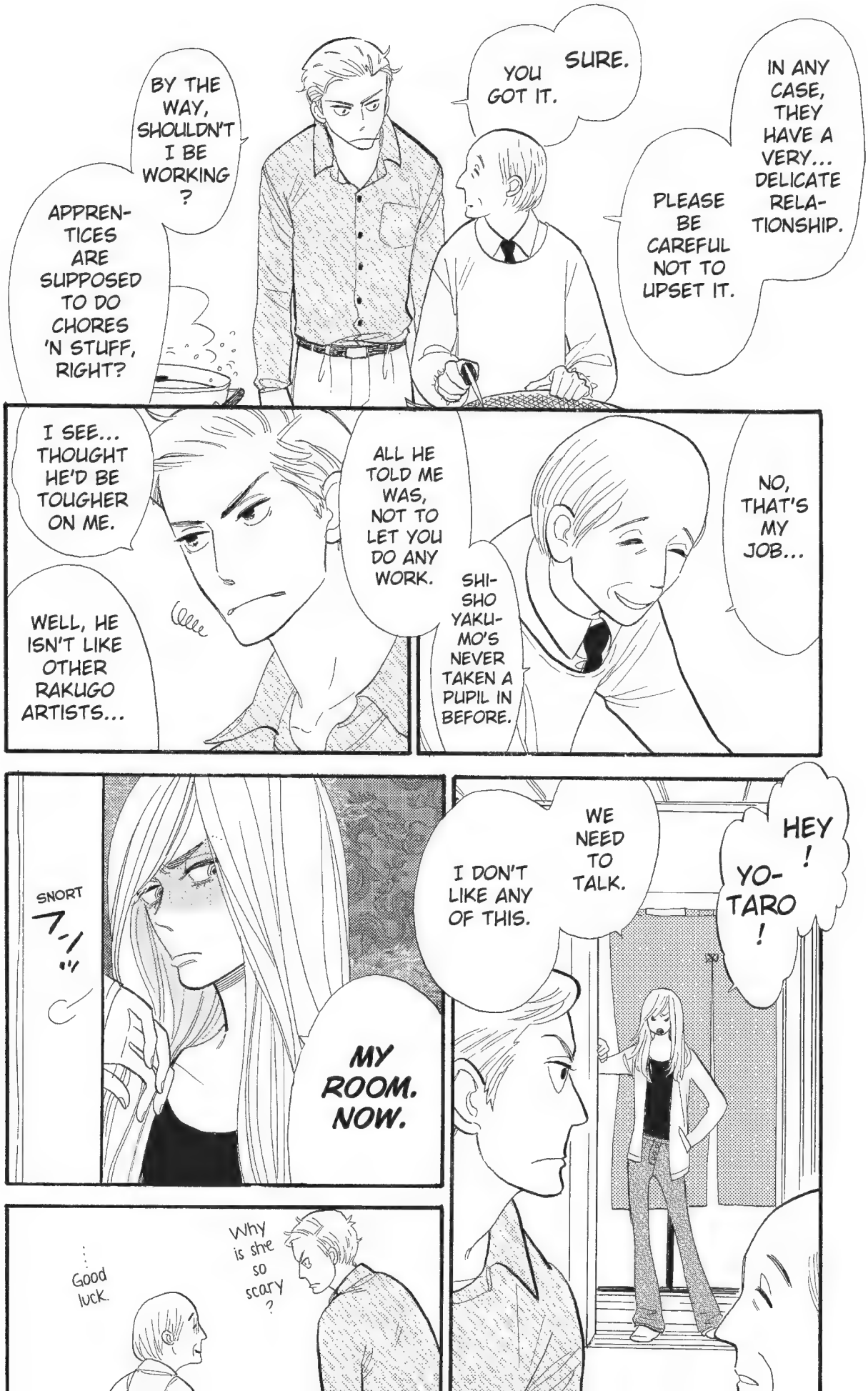



GLARE
じぃ〜
I'VE TAKEN AN APPRENTICE.
MY FIRST. WHICH MAKES HIM MY GREATEST, TOO, HM?
WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT, OLD MAN?
AN APPRENTICE?!
BUT WHY?! WHY NOW?
YOU ALWAYS SAID YOU'D NEVER TAKE ONE!
SO?
CHANGED MY MIND.
IT'S MY HOUSE. WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
PAT
PAT
IT'LL BE GOOD TO HAVE A YOUNG MAN AROUND. VERY HANDY.
PLUS, THIS YOTARO, HE'S FUNNY.
GRIN
にぱ
HELLO!
BEEN A WHILE SINCE I TALKED TO A WOMAN.
THAT'S KONATSU. FOUL MOUTH AND BAD TEMPER,
BUT A GOOD GIRL.
SNAP
ぶちっ

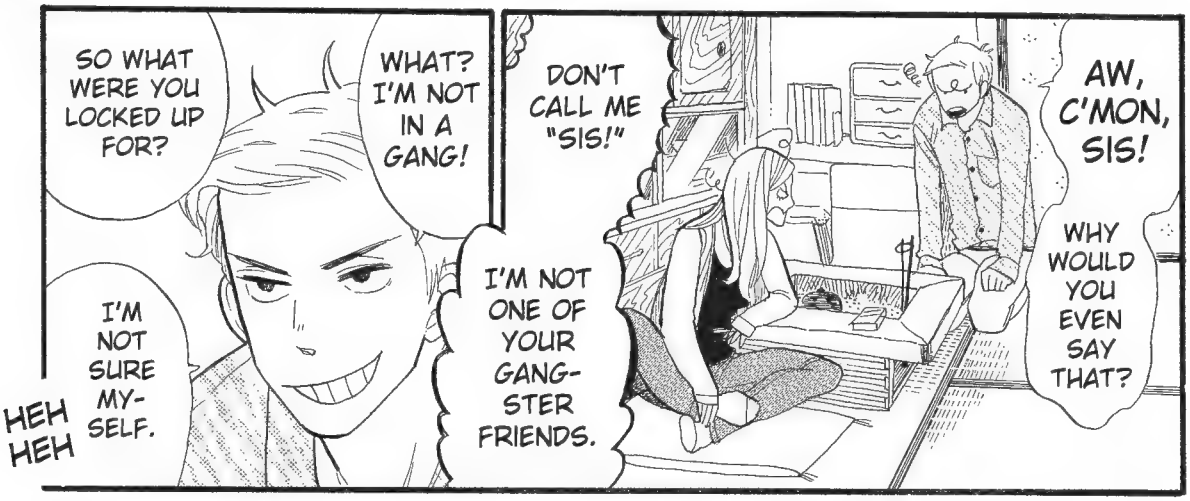
*On Stage, Sukeroku: In Memoriam

YURAKUTEI SUKEROKU.
HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS.
HE WAS A RAKUGO GENIUS, HE REALLY WAS.
KONATSU IS SUKEROKU'S DAUGHTER.
D'DON!

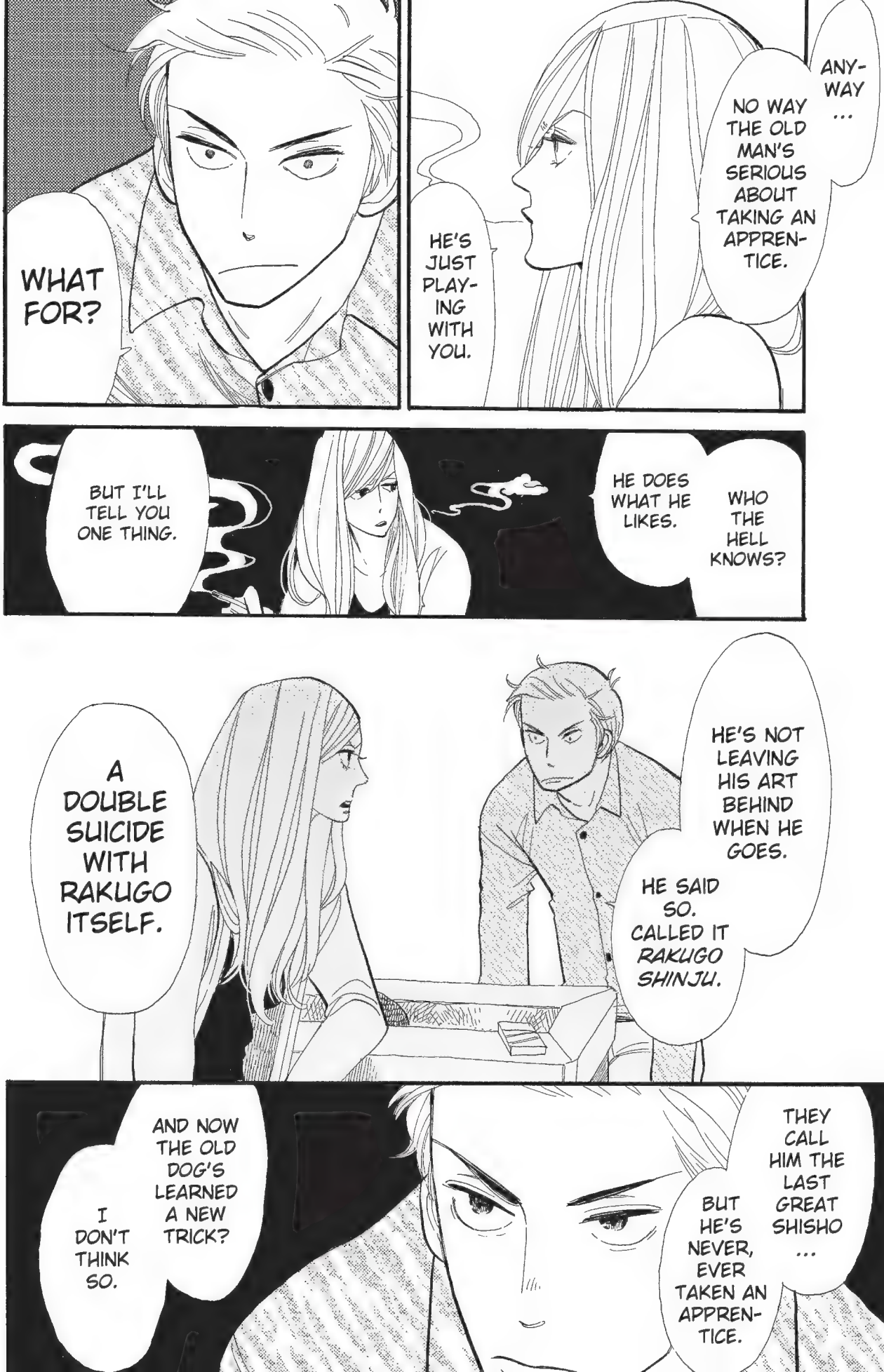

THE DECADE AFTER THE WAR, THE SHOWA 30S, WAS THE GOLDEN AGE OF RAKUGO.
SUKEROKU AND OUR SHISHO WERE ITS TWO GREAT YOUNG HOPES. APPRENTICES TO THE FORMER YAKUMO—YAKUMO VII.
HIS WIFE, TOO.
KONATSU WAS JUST A CHILD, WITH NO OTHER FAMILY TO SPEAK OF. SO OUR SHISHO TOOK HER IN.
THEY HAD THE WORLD AT THEIR FEET. ANYTHING SEEMED POSSIBLE.
AND THEN SUKEROKU PASSED AWAY...
WOW.
THAT'S HEAVY.

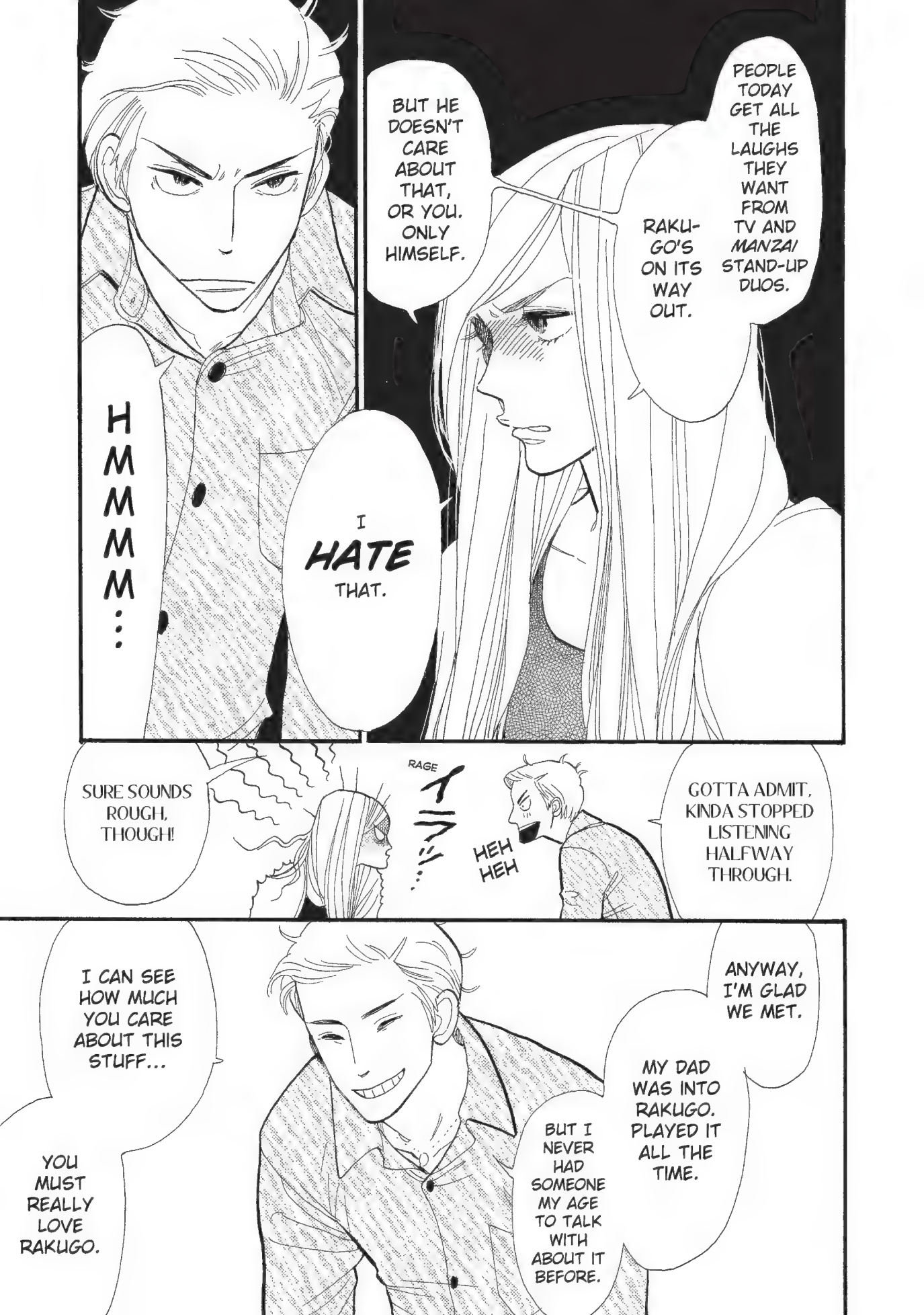

BY THE WAY, SHOULDN'T I BE WORKING?
APPRENTICES ARE SUPPOSED TO DO CHORES 'N STUFF, RIGHT?
SURE. YOU GOT IT.
IN ANY CASE, THEY HAVE A VERY... DELICATE RELATIONSHIP.
PLEASE BE CAREFUL NOT TO UPSET IT.
I SEE... THOUGHT HE'D BE TOUGHER ON ME.
WELL, HE ISN'T LIKE OTHER RAKUGO ARTISTS...
ALL HE TOLD ME WAS, NOT TO LET YOU DO ANY WORK.
SHISHO YAKUMO'S NEVER TAKEN A PUPIL IN BEFORE.
NO, THAT'S MY JOB...
SNORT
MY ROOM. NOW.
I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THIS.
WE NEED TO TALK.
HEY! YOTARO!
Good luck.
Why is she so scary?

LISTEN.
I WON'T HOLD IT AGAINST YOU.
FWOO
GET OUT WHILE YOU STILL CAN.


AW, C'MON, SIS!
WHY WOULD YOU EVEN SAY THAT?
DON'T CALL ME "SIS!"
I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR GANG-STER FRIENDS.
WHAT? I'M NOT IN A GANG!
SO WHAT WERE YOU LOCKED UP FOR?
I'M NOT SURE MY-SELF.
HEH HEH

YOU REALLY ARE A YOTARO.
I have a real name.
?
WHY DOES EVERYONE KEEP CALLING ME THAT?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A "YOTARO" IS YET?
IT'S A RAKUGO CHARACTER TYPE. A LOT LIKE YOU.
OH YEAH ?
? ?
Yotaro n: a foolish man, a block-head


WHAT FOR?
HE'S JUST PLAYING WITH YOU.
NO WAY THE OLD MAN'S SERIOUS ABOUT TAKING AN APPRENTICE.
ANYWAY ...
BUT I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING.
HE DOES WHAT HE LIKES.
WHO THE HELL KNOWS?
A DOUBLE SUICIDE WITH RAKUGO ITSELF.
HE'S NOT LEAVING HIS ART BEHIND WHEN HE GOES.
HE SAID SO. CALLED IT RAKUGO SHINJU.
I DON'T THINK SO.
AND NOW THE OLD DOG'S LEARNED A NEW TRICK?
BUT HE'S NEVER, EVER TAKEN AN APPRENTICE.
THEY CALL HIM THE LAST GREAT SHISHO ...


HMMMM...
I HATE THAT.
BUT HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THAT, OR YOU. ONLY HIMSELF.
RAKU-GO'S ON ITS WAY OUT.
PEOPLE TODAY GET ALL THE LAUGHS THEY WANT FROM TV AND MANZAI STAND-UP DUOS.
SURE SOUNDS ROUGH, THOUGH!
RAGE
イラッ...
HEH HEH
GOTTA ADMIT, KINDA STOPPED LISTENING HALFWAY THROUGH.
I CAN SEE HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT THIS STUFF...
YOU MUST REALLY LOVE RAKUGO.
BUT I NEVER HAD SOMEONE MY AGE TO TALK WITH ABOUT IT BEFORE.
MY DAD WAS INTO RAKUGO. PLAYED IT ALL THE TIME.
ANYWAY, I'M GLAD WE MET.

WELL, ANYWAY, I KNOW I CAN BE A HANDFUL.
BUT I HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG.
WOMEN DON'T PERFORM RAKUGO.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GOOD I GET...
IT'S NOT ABOUT LOVE.
UGH
Show me.
Show me.
THAT'S AMAZING, SIS!
YOU CAN PERFORM, TOO?!
RE-AL-LY?!
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.
WELL, FINE.
SOME PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT.
HMPH
TE-TANG
TANG
TENG
TENG
HUH?
IS SOMEONE PLAYING A RECORD?

TANG
TE-TENG
I'll just listen here.
HE'S GOT CHOPS.
MAYBE I'LL GO WATCH ...
Would he be angry?
I WOULDN'T.
He'd kill you.
IT'S A SHAMISEN.
THE OLD MAN ALWAYS PRACTICES THIS TIME OF DAY.
RAKUGO SONGS, GEISHA SONGS, KABUKI MUSIC, DANCES...
GETS UP TO A LOT, WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING.
REALLY?
A TRUE ARTIST.
TENG
TE-TANG
TANG
TANG
SO HE PLAYS LIKE THIS EVERY DAY?
I COULD GET USED TO THIS PLACE!
TE-TE-TENG
TANG
TE-TE-TENG
TENG
IMAGINE ALL THIS, ALL OF SENSEI'S ART... JUST DISAPPEARING ...
WHAT A WASTE THAT'D BE.
TENG
TANG

どどん
TA-DA!
MY GOOD-NESS, SENSEI! ♡
WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS DELIGHTFUL SPECIMEN? ♡
FIN-ISHED ?
HMM. NOT BAD!
GUESS THE CLOTHES REALLY DO MAKE THE MAN.
HMPH
THANKS!
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS OKAY? THESE ARE SOME NICE THREADS.
♪ HEE ♫
WHAT CAN I SAY? I HAVE A KNACK.
REALLY TAKES ME BACK. I'D ALWAYS PICK OUT HIS KIMONO, TOO.

NOW... THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF GODS, BUT THE ONE HUMANS HATE MOST IS THE GOD OF DEATH...
JUST A LITTLE HOBBY OF MINE.
RELAX AND ENJOY IT.
I FEEL LIKE A RAKUGO ARTIST!
Tall, aren't you?
WHAT AN HONOR!
HEH HEH!
WHEN DID YOU LEARN THAT?
STOP IT. YOU'RE EMBARRASSING YOURSELF.
GLARE
Y-YES, SIR...
SOB!
NOW... CAN I SEE THE YUKATA FABRIC TOO?
I'VE NEVER SEEN SENSEI LIKE THIS.
Giggle
IT'S LIKE HE'S DRESSING HIS GRANDCHILD!
OR HIS PET,
MORE LIKE IT.
Hee hee

YO-TA-RO!
NEXT UP: ACCES-SO-RIES.
THERE'S STILL AN HOUR BEFORE SHOW-TIME.
LET'S ENJOY IT!♪
Please come again.
YES, SIR!
POMP
ポン
PERHAPS I SHOULD ORDER A COLLAR, TOO?
Oh, sensei!
Haw haw!
EX-CEL-LENT AN-SWER.
HAVING AN APPREN-TICE IS MORE FUN THAN I THOUGHT.
Heh heh
I ONLY WISH YOU'D FOUND ME EARLIER.
COME ON, YOTARO.
YES, SIR!
DON
DON
DON
TOKO
YAKUMO SENSEI!
AN HONOR AS ALWAYS. ♪

S'UP.
...
COME ALONG, YO-TARO.
THIS WAY.
WHOOSH
HM?
HEL-LO.
HEH HEH
Funny guy!
Art itself, refined to perfection! Merely to live in the same age is an honor beyond words!
Your performance at the Toyoko-Cho Master's Club yesterday was incomparable!
PANT
I came here today just to express my gratitude for—
SUCH EXQUISITE COLDNESS!
BLUSH
IT GIVES ME CHILLS ...
THAT'S AMAKEN. A RAKUGO CRITIC.
IGNORE HIM.
He's still watching
UH, SHOULD WE JUST...?
FAN OF MINE.
CAN'T STAND HIM.
ADIEU FOR NOW!
At once, sir!
SQUEE
MOVE.

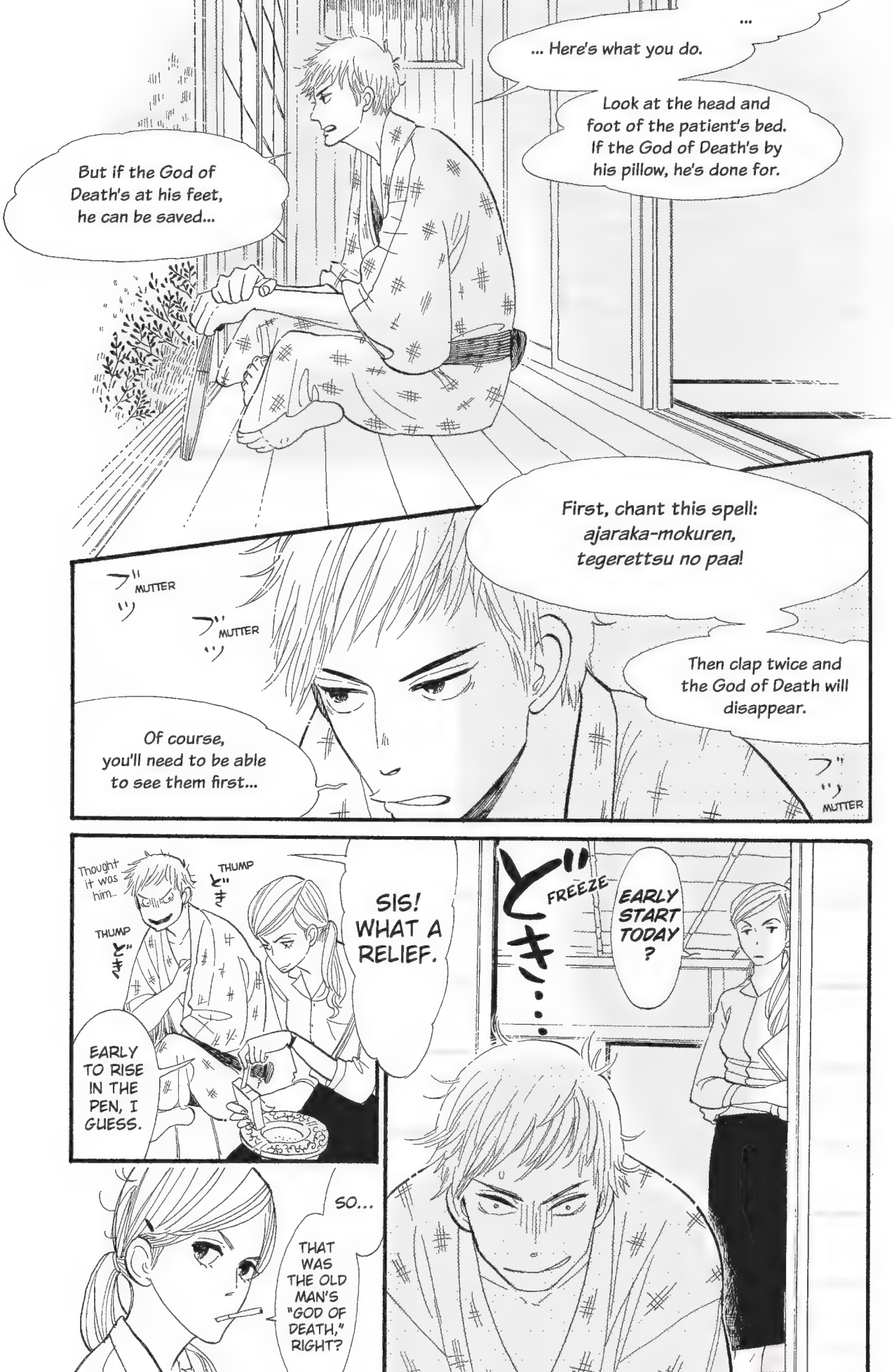
YOTARO!
YOU DON'T NEED TO STICK AROUND AND HELP.
GO AND WATCH THE SHOW.
IF ANYONE TALKS TO YOU, JUST SAY "WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU."
WOW!
Really?!
WELL, A SHORTENED VERSION.
IF IT MAKES YOU THAT HAPPY, IT'S WORTH IT TO ME.
GRIN
DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING AN APPRENTICE TONIGHT.
ALL I WANT YOU TO DO IS LISTEN AND LAUGH.
GOT IT?
HEH.
TONIGHT, JUST FOR YOU... I THINK I MIGHT DO "GOD OF DEATH."
SNAP
SO MAKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE LIKABLE, IF NOTHING ELSE.
YES, SIR...
YES, SIR!

GOOD.
YOU DO THAT.
...
LOOKIN' FOR-WARD TO IT!
GOOD.
GOT A MIN-UTE?
HEY, YOU.
YIKES
HE'S SO COOL!
SIGH
I'M SHISHO YAKU-MO'S AP-PREN-TICE.
BOW
THE NAME'S YOTARO.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
WE'RE PAST THAT STAGE!
I HEARD ABOUT YOU. WHO ARE YOU REALLY?
WHY DOES YAKUMO SENSEI LIKE YOU SO MUCH?

Note: The *debayashi* is the music played to announce the performance.

YAKUMO!
TON-T-TON TON
CHEER
TE-TE-TENG
TON-T-TON
TENG
TENG
TEKE-TUKU
TON-T-TON-T-TON
TENG TENG
八雲
*Sign: Yakumo
WOOOOOO!
IT'S A RARE THING!
TO INSPIRE SUCH A REACTION JUST BY TAKING THE STAGE...
Huh
NOW THAT SO MANY OF THE GREAT SHISHOS ARE GONE...
Good evening.
It's an honor to see such a packed house.
A true honor...
TEKE-TUKU
TENG...
TON-TON!
Thank you all for coming.
There have always been fads and fashions in our world and it seems the same is true of the world of the gods...
...all kinds of gods, but the one humans hate most is...
"THE GOD OF DEATH"!
JUST LIKE HE PROMISED!
YES!

...please, I'll pay 10,000 ryo... you must save my husband...
I'm afraid this is the end... no recovery from...
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND YOU'RE BACK IN OLD EDO...
HOW WONDERFUL...
AHH...
...Iseya Den'emon in Koji-machi...
JUST LOOK AT HIM...
THE WAY HIS EYES MOVE...
NO WAY.
NO CLOSIN' MY EYES.
CAN'T EVEN TELL WHO HE IS ANY MORE.
THE WAY HE PULLS YOU IN...
HE BECOMES EVERY CHARACTER IN TURN.
I KNEW HE WAS GOOD, BUT, WOW...
THIS IS A SHISHO AT WORK!
HA HA HA HA
HAW HAW HAW
SNICKER SNICKER
くすくす……


...
... Here's what you do.
Look at the head and foot of the patient's bed. If the God of Death's by his pillow, he's done for.
But if the God of Death's at his feet, he can be saved...
First, chant this spell: ajaraka-mokuren, tegerettsu no paa!
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
Then clap twice and the God of Death will disappear.
Of course, you'll need to be able to see them first...
Thought it was him...
THUMP
THUMP
SIS! WHAT A RELIEF.
EARLY TO RISE IN THE PEN, I GUESS.
FREEZE
EARLY START TODAY ?
SO...
THAT WAS THE OLD MAN'S "GOD OF DEATH," RIGHT?

HE PERFORMED IT AT THE YOSE LAST NIGHT.
JUST FOR ME!
HUH?
AND YOU LEARNED IT ON THE SPOT?
I'D HEARD IT BEFORE IN PRISON.
I HAVE A GOOD MEMORY FOR WHAT I LIKE.
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...
EVEN A MORON CAN LEARN ONE TRICK.

HEH HEH
She called me a moron!
LET'S HEAR IT, THEN.

YOUR "GOD OF DEATH" COMES OFF AS FUNNY.
RE-AL-LY?
SO YOU CAN ADD YOUR OWN TAKE TO IT?
THE OLD MAN PLAYS THE GOD OF DEATH MORE CYNICAL-LY.
YEP.
ANY WAY YOU LIKE.
AND MY DAD'S TAKE WAS MORE LIKE A GANG BOSS.

I PRACTICE HERE EVERY MORNING BEFORE WORK.
THE OLD MAN'S A LATE RISER, SO HE DOESN'T KNOW.
LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.
SHOW ME
SHOW ME
SHOW ME
SHOW ME
IS THAT A WHOLE BOOK OF YOUR DAD'S STORIES?
イラッ GRR.
I LOVED MY DAD'S "GOD OF DEATH."
HE PLAYED IT SO TOUGH THAT IT WASN'T EVEN SCARY ANY MORE.
BUT THAT'S WHY IT WAS SO FUNNY.
SNICKER
7°
7°
JUST A LITTLE.
にま GRIN
LET ME HEAR ONE AND I'LL KEEP IT A SECRET.
YOUR DAD'S "GOD OF DEATH."
WOW!
YOU'VE ALREADY MEMORIZED ALL OF THESE, RIGHT?

OH, YEAH ...
THAT'S SOME GOOD RAKUGO.
YOUR VOICE IS GREAT, SIS.
IT'S STRONG, AND IT REALLY CARRIES...
あっ!

IT CARRIES SO WELL. A PLEASURE TO LISTEN TO.
YOU HAVE A GREAT VOICE, KONATSU.

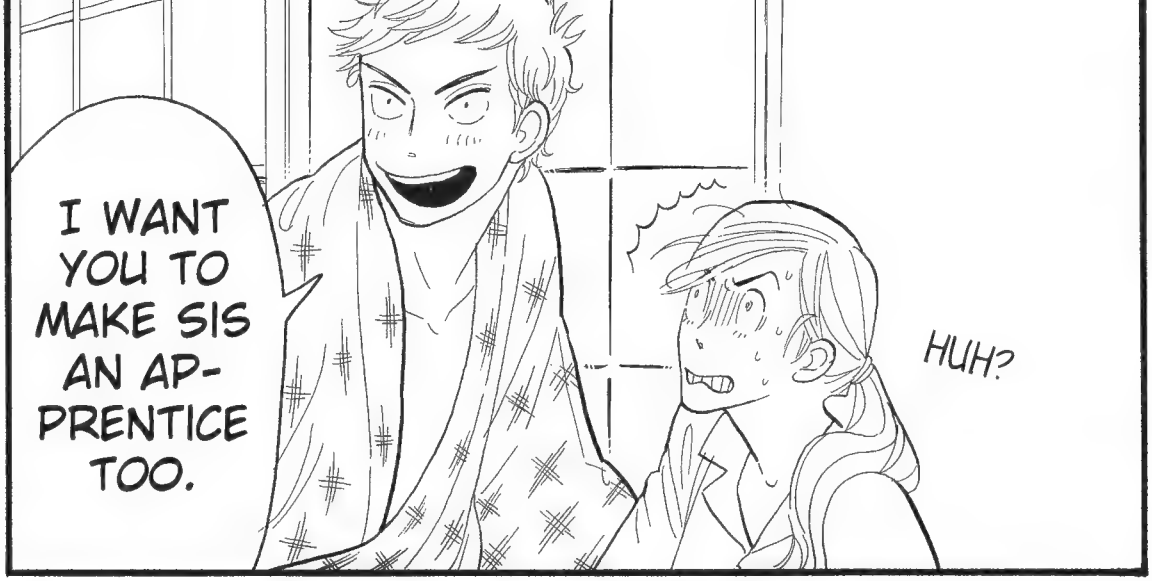
ぼっ
BLUSH
スコーン
PING
OW!
WHO THE HELL ASKED YOUR OPINION?!
YOU COULD GO PRO WITH THOSE CHOPS, SIS...
SO WHY DON'T YOU?
DON'T BE AN IDIOT.
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FEMALE RAKUGO ARTIST.
ケッ
HMPH
NOT TO MENTION WHAT THAT OLD MAN WOULD SAY!
UGH. I HATE TO EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.
BUT WHY?
HOW CAN YOU KNOW IF YOU DON'T ASK?
I KNOW!
HOW LONG DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN LIVING WITH THAT STUBBORN OLD BLOCK-HEAD?

IF EVEN YOU FEEL THAT WAY...
THEN I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO RAKUGO ...
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
GET OUT WHILE YOU STILL CAN.
SMIRK
フッ
SLIDE
ガラ
MORNING.
WHAT ARE YOU TO UP TO TOGETHER ?
CRINGE
しん…
YOU'RE UP EARLY, OLD MAN.
...
YES... SOME WRITING TO TAKE CARE OF.
MY LEAST FAVORITE PART OF THE JOB.
RUSTLE
ハサハサ
AND KONATSU, STOP CALLING ME "OLD MAN."
SHUT UP, OLD MAN!
CAN I HAVE A MINUTE?
HM ?
WHAT IS IT?
SHI-SHO !

I WANT TO LEARN YOUR RAKUGO. FOR REAL.
I WANT MORE PEOPLE TO SEE IT. ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE.
THE WORLD DESERVES TO KNOW ABOUT SOME-THING THIS GREAT.

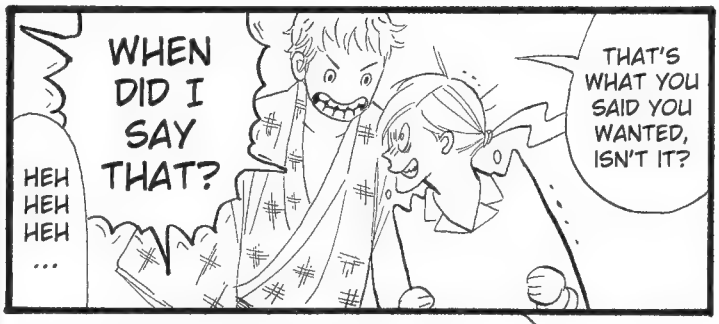
I WANT TO BE YOUR APPRENTICE, FOR REAL.
BUT I WANT TO LEARN, TOO. EVEN IF IT THAT PART IS HARD.
YOU'RE REAL EASY ON ME, AND I APPRECIATE THAT...

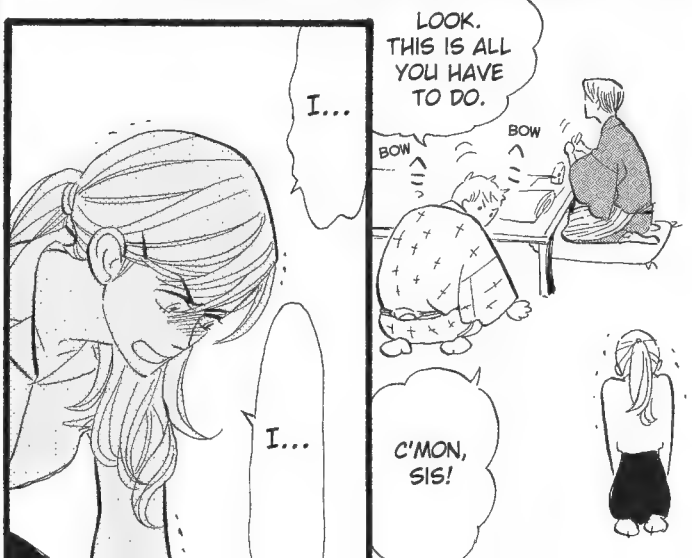
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUCH A PLEASANT FIND.
TRY THIS ANSWER:
AND YOU'RE SERIOUS.
PITY.
YOU DO, DO YOU?
MY APPRENTICE FOR REAL?
NO.
SO?
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?
カシャーン CLATTER
I AIN'T GOING NOWHERE.
TILL I HEAR A "YES"!
にまー GRIN
OH, I FORGOT.
THERE'S ONE MORE THING...

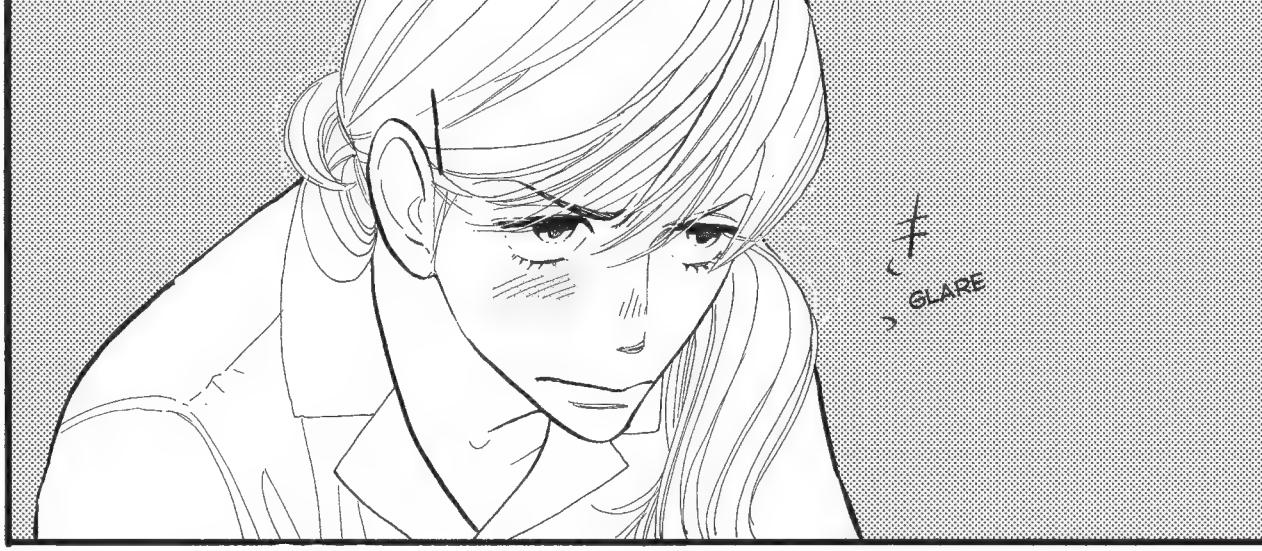

I WANT YOU TO MAKE SIS AN AP-PRENTICE TOO.
HUH?

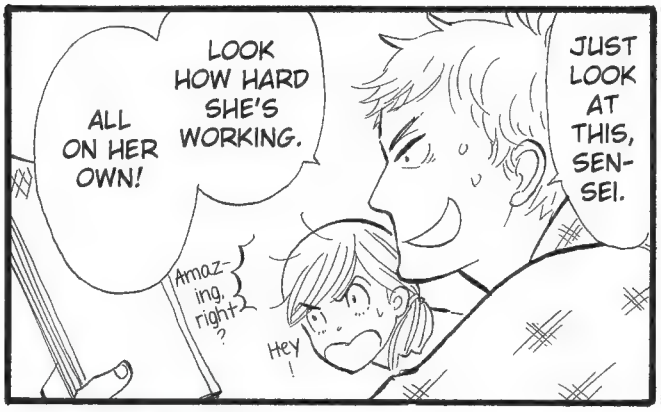
WHO ASKED YOU—
YOU IDIOT!
カっ BLUSH
カっ BLUSH

HUH? YOU'LL BE BOWING YOUR HEAD TOO, THEN?
THAT'LL BE A SIGHT.


WHEN DID I SAY THAT?
HEH HEH HEH ...
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID YOU WANTED, ISN'T IT?


I...
I...
LOOK. THIS IS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO.
BOW
BOW
C'MON, SIS!


GLARE


JUST LOOK AT THIS, SEN-SEI.
LOOK HOW HARD SHE'S WORKING.
ALL ON HER OWN!
Amaz-ing, right?
Hey!

I CAN'T DO IT.
TREM-BLE わな
YO-TARO.
TREM-BLE わな

THEY'RE WHAT I LOVE.
SO WHAT?
THESE ARE ALL HIS STORIES ...
AREN'T THEY?
WELL, WELL ...
I KNEW YOU WERE DOING SOME-THING BEHIND MY BACK.

TOSS
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME ANGRY?
YOU UN-GRATE-FUL BRAT.

むか
RAGE
むっ
UH-OH
SIS!
むかっ
RAGE
DON'T!
I'M GONNA KILL HIM!
HE DE-SERVES TO DIE!
LET GO OF ME!

MY FA-THER ...
YU-RAKU-TEI SUKE-ROKU ...
YOU KILLED HIM!

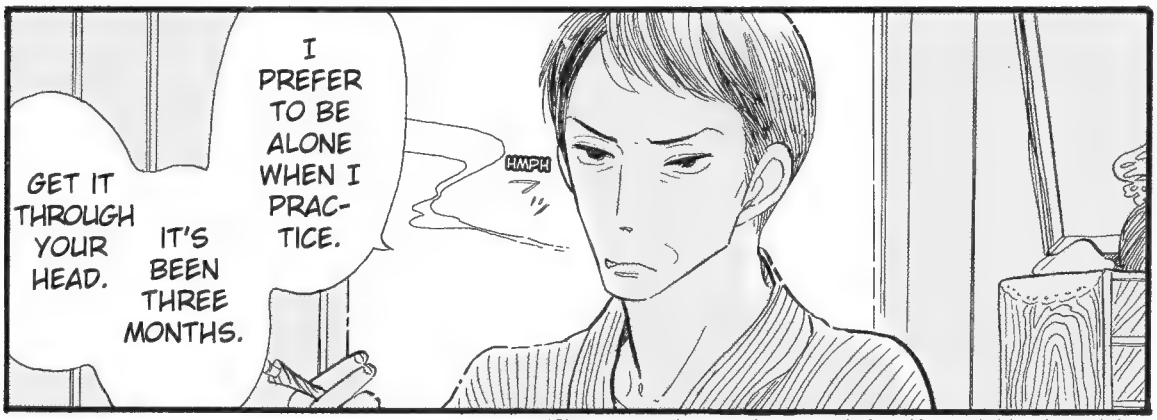
ドン
DON
ドン
DON
D'DON!
ドン!

# DESCENDING STORIES

YOTARO'S ODYSSEY: 2

SHOWA GENROKU RAKUGO SHINJU

TENG...
... Even
the ferry-man
of the under-world ...
TENG TENG...
TENG
TENG-TENG
TENG
Reach-es
the bottom with his pole...
*cicada sounds, summer
BE-BENG
CHIRP CHIRP*
So why can't I reach you...
TENG
TENK
TENG TENK TENG TENG
With my love...




*Okyo was an 18th-century Japanese artist famed for popularizing ghost paintings.

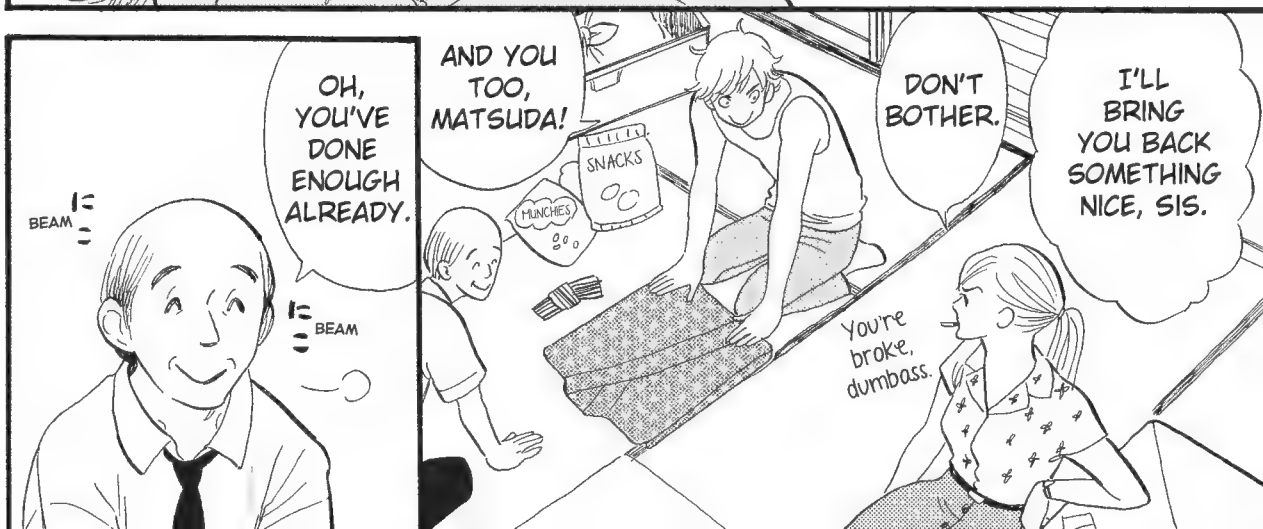
UH...
WELL, THERE GOES MY SECRET...
YOU KNOW... AT THE YOSE.
I SOMETIMES DROP BY.
AFTER MY CHORES ARE DONE, OF COURSE.
HM!...
FROWN
WHERE DID YOU HEAR IT?
I JUST ZIP OVER ON MY BIKE. THEY LET ME IN EVERYWHERE.
BEING YOUR APPRENTICE OPENS DOORS!
HOW DO YOU GET IN?
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE CAB FARE TO GET THERE.
THEY ALL KNOW MY FACE NOW.
TODAY THE THEATER MANAGER EVEN GAVE ME SOME POCKET MONEY.
POCKET MONEY...
IF YOU NEED MONEY, JUST ASK MATSUDA.
I'VE NEVER HAD AN APPRENTICE BEFORE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU NEED UNLESS YOU ASK.

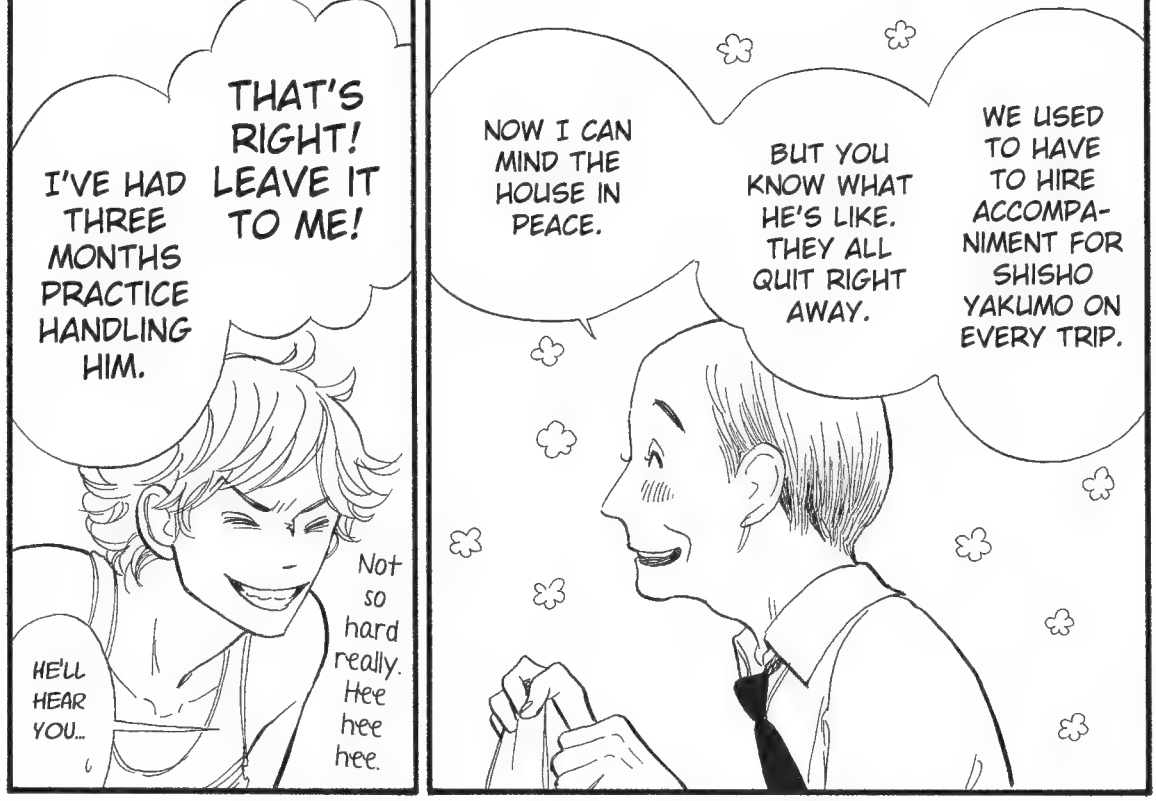
ANY-WAY, IF YOU GO AROUND BLAB-BING LIKE THAT...
IT PUTS ME IN AN AWK-WARD POSI-TION.
UNTIL I REGIS-TER YOU WITH THE ASSOCIA-TION...
YOU'RE NOT EVEN AT ZENZA* LEVEL.
*Zenza is the lowest rakugo rank: performers who go on first and also serve tea to those who go on after them.
...
MUCH AP-PRECI-ATED.
WELL. I'M GOING TO KYOTO TOMOR-ROW.
SIGH
YOU'LL BE CARRY-ING MY BAGS.
KYO-TO?!
YEAH, SO RIGHT NOW, I'M A TRAINEE.
WHAT-EVER NEEDS DOING, JUST ASK ME!
CHIRP CHIRP
カナカナカナ...
EVERY SUMMER, SHISHO BANSAI AND I PUT ON A TWO-MAN SHOW.
"COOL TALES FOR HOT NIGHTS." SENSUAL STORIES TO HELP THE AUDI-ENCE FOR-GET THE HEAT.
BANSAI'S LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU.
HE FELL ILL LAST YEAR AND NEVER FULLY RECOV-ERED.
SO YOU NEED TO BE ON YOUR BEST —
YES!

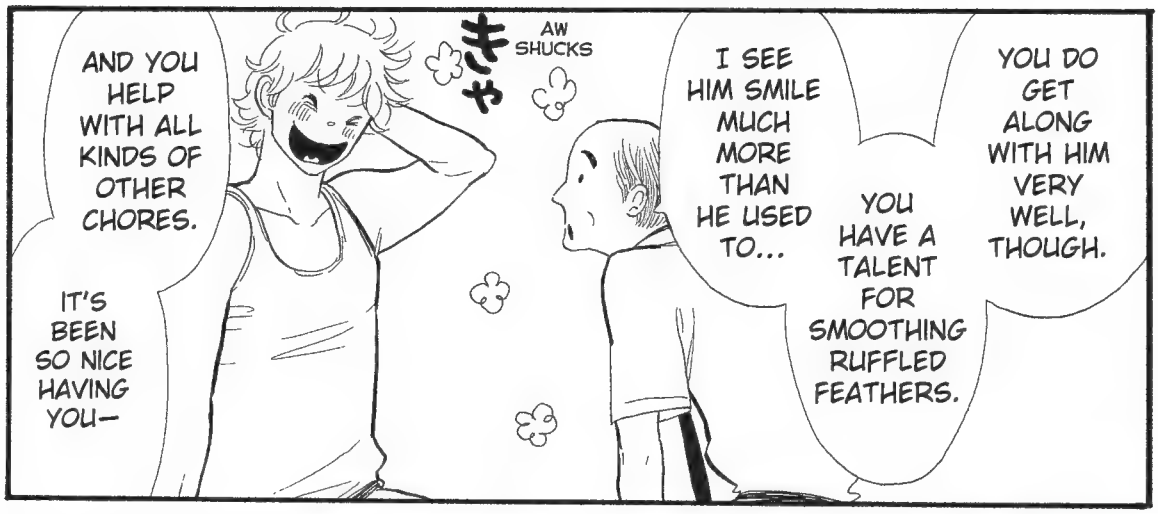
OWWW
YOUR BEST BEHAV-IOR.
JUST THE TWO OF US? THIS IS GOING TO BE GREAT!
I'VE NEVER GONE ON VACATION BEFORE!

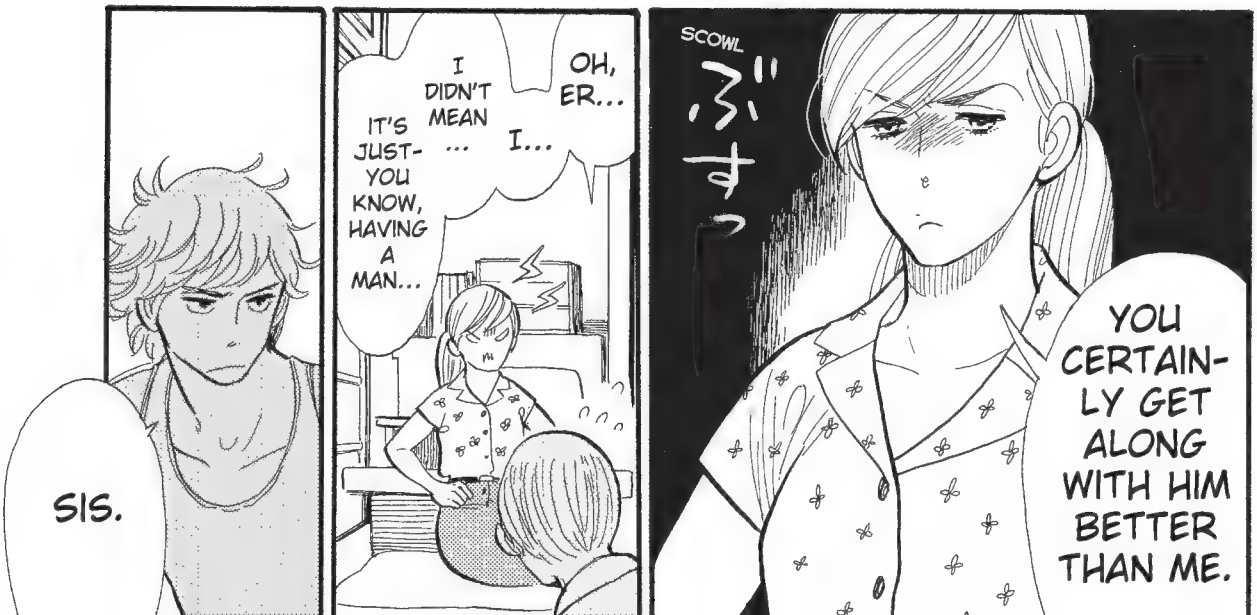
SIR!
happy...
so
so...
YES

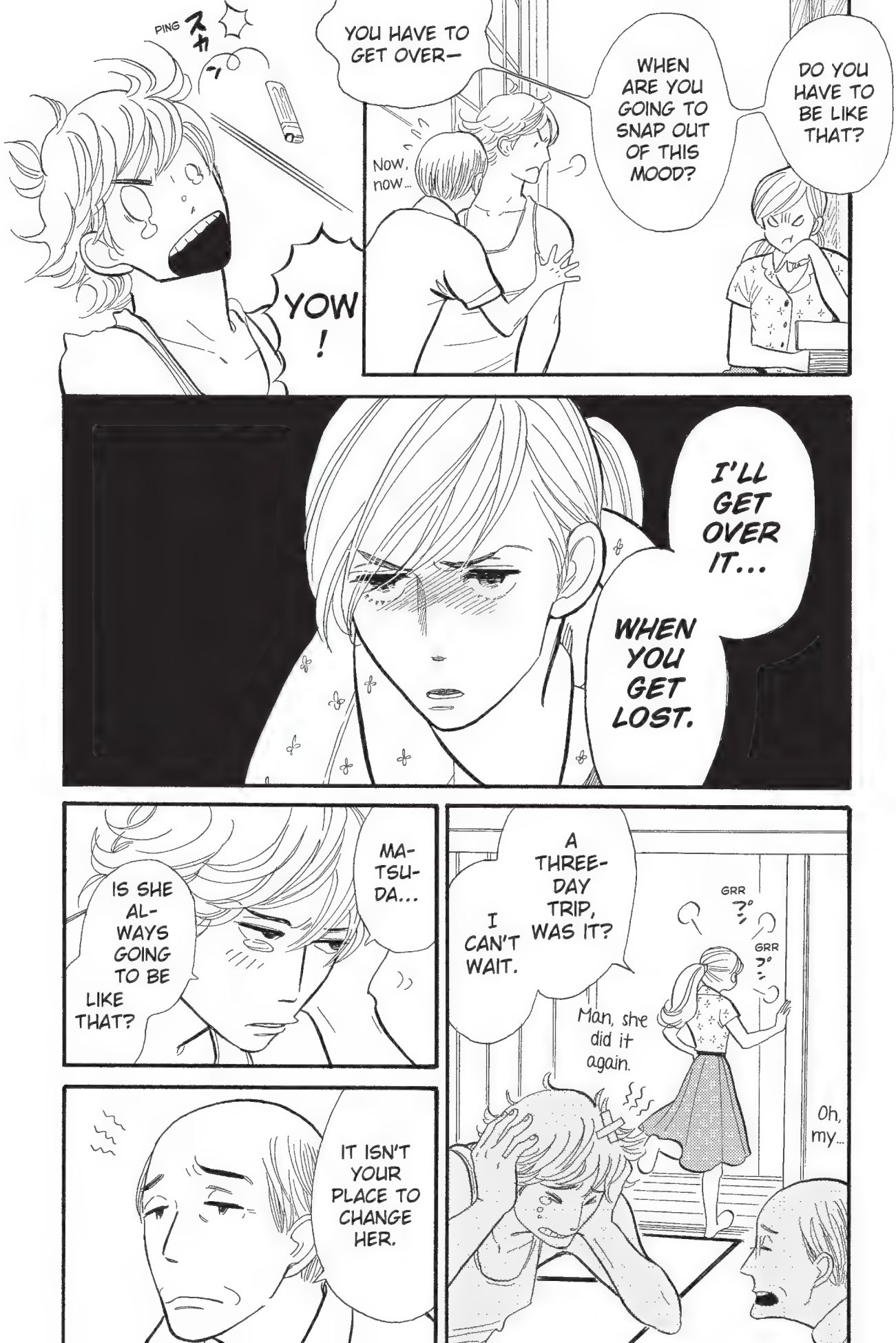
IT'S NOT A FIELD TRIP, YOU KNOW.


OH, YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH ALREADY.
BEAM
BEAM
AND YOU TOO, MATSUDA!
SNACKS
MUNCHIES
DON'T BOTHER.
I'LL BRING YOU BACK SOMETHING NICE, SIS.
You're broke, dumbass.


THAT'S RIGHT! LEAVE IT TO ME!
I'VE HAD THREE MONTHS PRACTICE HANDLING HIM.
HE'LL HEAR YOU...
Not so hard really. Hee hee hee.
NOW I CAN MIND THE HOUSE IN PEACE.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE. THEY ALL QUIT RIGHT AWAY.
WE USED TO HAVE TO HIRE ACCOMPANIMENT FOR SHISHO YAKUMO ON EVERY TRIP.


AND YOU HELP WITH ALL KINDS OF OTHER CHORES.
IT'S BEEN SO NICE HAVING YOU—
きゃ
AW SHUCKS
I SEE HIM SMILE MUCH MORE THAN HE USED TO...
YOU HAVE A TALENT FOR SMOOTHING RUFFLED FEATHERS.
YOU DO GET ALONG WITH HIM VERY WELL, THOUGH.

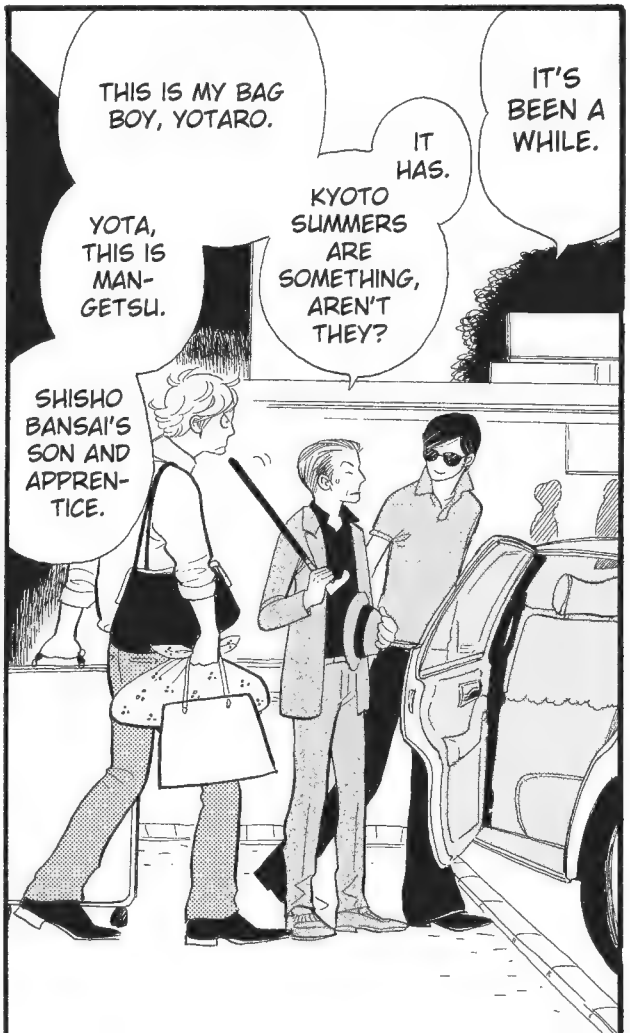

SIS.
IT'S JUST- YOU KNOW, HAVING A MAN...
I DIDN'T MEAN ... I...
OH, ER...
SCOWL
ふすっ
YOU CERTAINLY GET ALONG WITH HIM BETTER THAN ME.


PING
YOU HAVE TO GET OVER—
Now, now...
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO SNAP OUT OF THIS MOOD?
DO YOU HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT?
YOW!
I'LL GET OVER IT...
WHEN YOU GET LOST.
MA-TSU-DA...
IS SHE AL-WAYS GOING TO BE LIKE THAT?
A THREE-DAY TRIP, WAS IT?
I CAN'T WAIT.
GRR
GRR
Man, she did it again.
Oh, my...
IT ISN'T YOUR PLACE TO CHANGE HER.

CALLING THE MAN WHO RAISED YOU A KILLER...
IT'S NOT RIGHT.
THEY HAVEN'T SAID A WORD TO EACH OTHER SINCE THAT BIG FIGHT.
AND THAT WAS MY FAULT.
I UNDERSTAND HOW SHE FEELS, BUT...
IT CAN'T BE ANY EASIER FOR SHISHO YAKUMO.
YES, WITHOUT A DOUBT.
SUKEROKU'S DEATH WAS AN ACCIDENT, RIGHT?
WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING.
BROOD むしゃ BROOD くしゃ
Time to pack!
THEY'VE ALWAYS FOUGHT LIKE THIS.
AND YET THEY STILL LIVE TOGETHER.
THEY SHARE SOMETHING WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND.
YOTA...
THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT LIKE WE HOPE.

SHI-
SHO
YAKU-
MO!
京都駅
新幹線

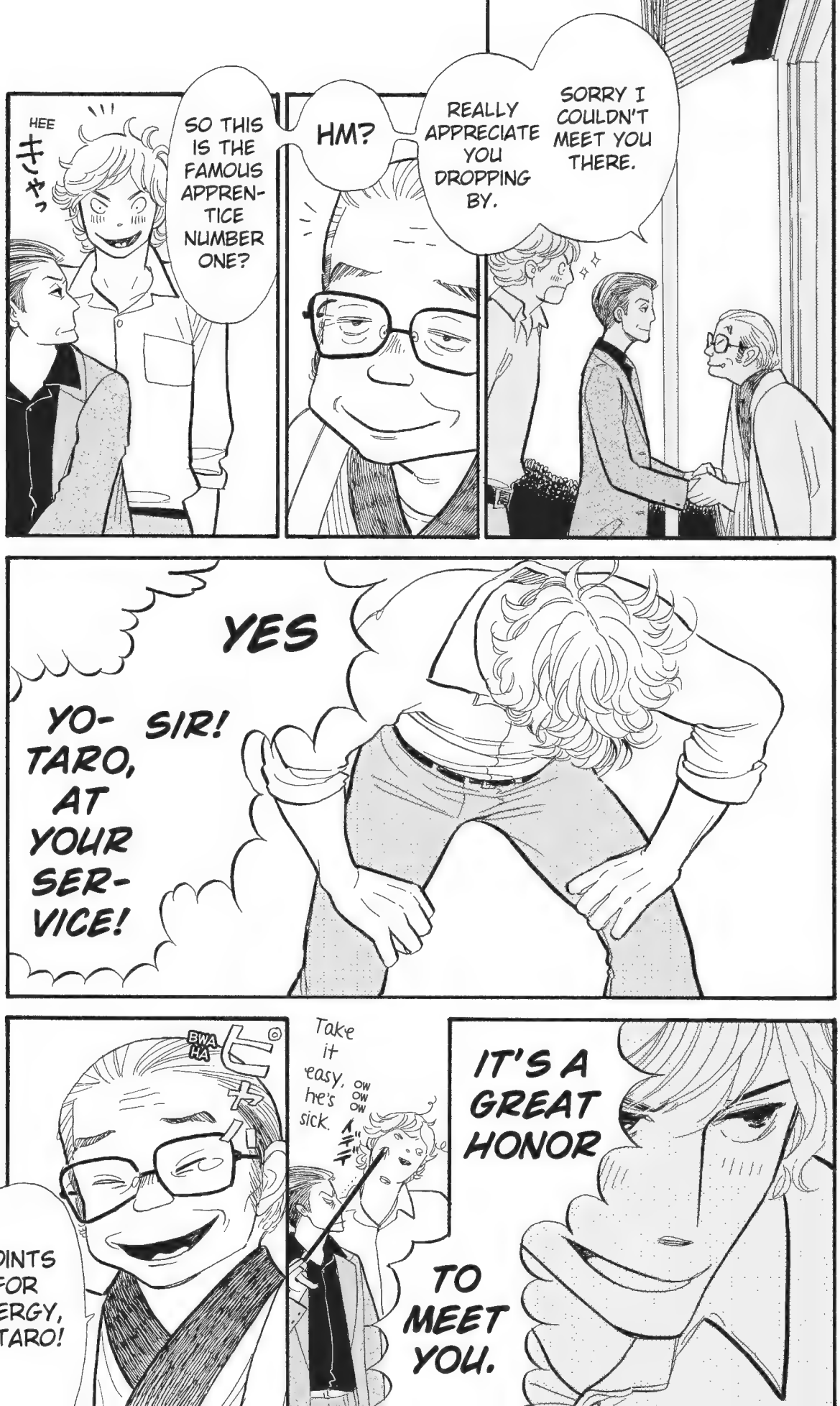
GRIN
SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS YOTA-RO?
I'M SO JEAL-OUS.


IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
IT HAS.
KYOTO SUMMERS ARE SOMETHING, AREN'T THEY?
THIS IS MY BAG BOY, YOTARO.
YOTA, THIS IS MAN-GETSU.
SHISHO BANSAI'S SON AND APPREN-TICE.

HI

SHALL WE DROP BY THE HOUSE ON THE WAY TO THE HOTEL?
BY ALL MEANS.
HOW IS SHISHO BANSAI?
MUCH BETTER.
HE THINKS VERY HIGHLY OF YOU, SHISHO YAKUMO.
HE'S BEEN SAVING HIS STRENGTH FOR THIS.
HIS HOSPITALIZATION WAS QUITE A SHOCK.
WE NEED HIM AROUND FOR A LONG WHILE YET.
Hey! The great Buddha of Nara!
OH, I FOUND YOUR NEWS MORE SHOCKING, SHISHO YAKUMO.
AN APPRENTICE! WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT?
HIM?
HE'S REALLY MORE OF A PET THAN AN APPRENTICE.
I'M GETTING SOFT-HEARTED IN MY OLD AGE.

SOME THINGS DON'T CHANGE, I SEE...
IF YOU'RE TAKING ON ANY MORE...
I'M INTER-ESTED ♡
EH?
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
円屋萬歳
淀川公男
*Yodogawa Kimio *Tsubura Mansai
YA-KUMO!
LOOKING GOOD!

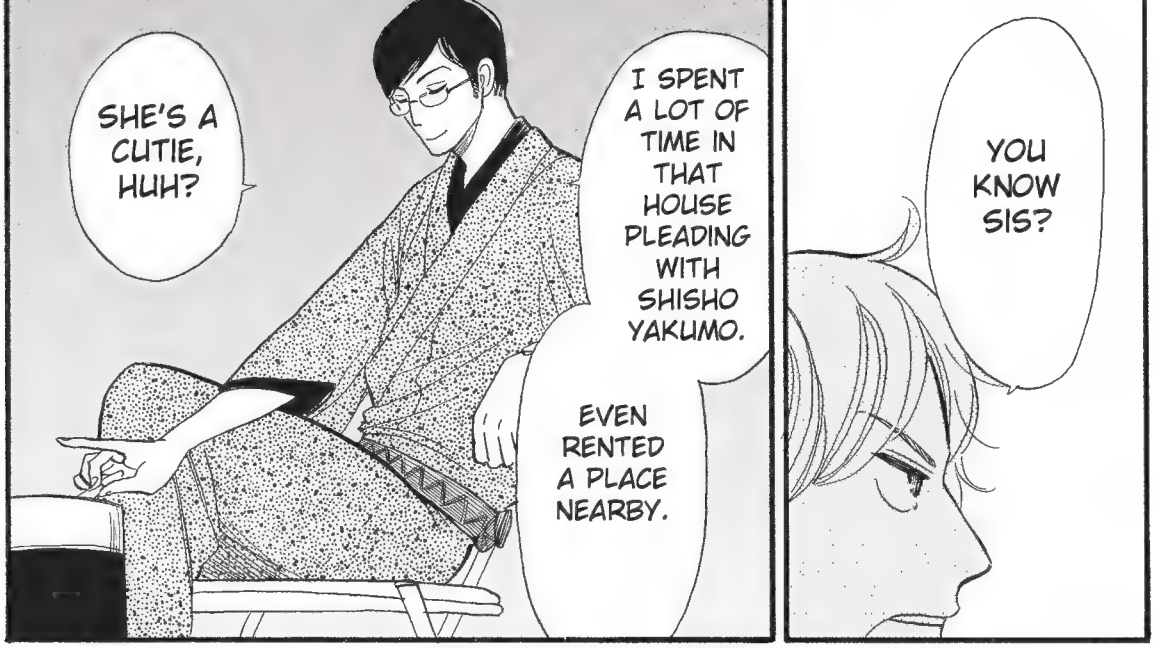

SORRY I COULDN'T MEET YOU THERE.
REALLY APPRECIATE YOU DROPPING BY.
HM?
SO THIS IS THE FAMOUS APPRENTICE NUMBER ONE?
HEE
キシャッ
YES SIR!
YO-TARO, AT YOUR SERVICE!
IT'S A GREAT HONOR
TO MEET YOU.
Take it easy, he's sick.
ow ow ow
BWA HA HA
POINTS FOR ENERGY, YOTARO!

IF HE'S YOUR APPRENTICE, THAT MAKES HIM LIKE MY GRANDSON.
RIGHT, YOTARO?
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE DARK, BROODING TYPE, YAKUMO...
MAYBE SOME YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE IS JUST WHAT YOU NEED.
BANTER キーャっ
BANTER キーャっ
IN EXCELLENT HEALTH, I'D SAY.
ANOTHER APPRENTICE?
You already have more than 100...
DON'T ENCOURAGE HIM.
YES, SIR!
You ever get tired of this guy, just come to me.
AH.
IT'S ALL FOR SHOW.
ONE OF HIS BAD HABITS.

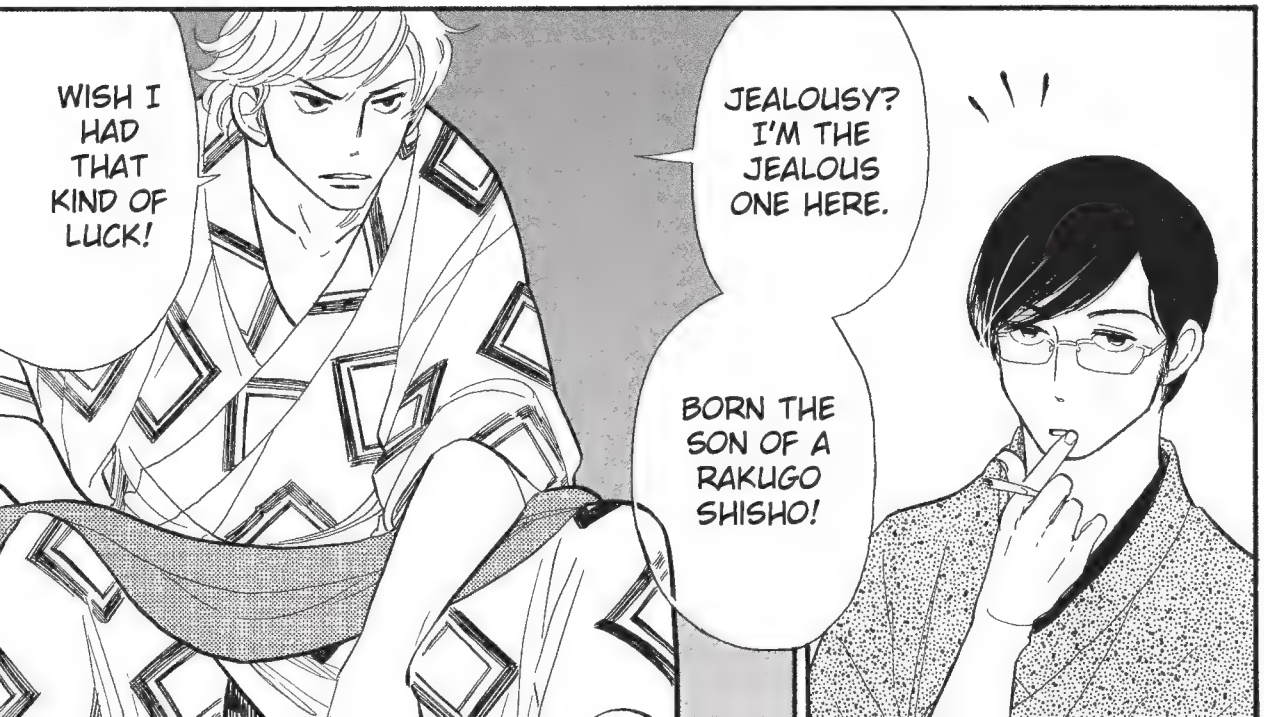
*Mansai and Yakumo, Cool Tales for Hot Nights.

IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY...
CAN I BORROW YOU FOR A WHILE?
I'M BURSTING WITH CURIOSI-TY.
MY FATHER BOR-ROWED IT SPECIAL-LY.
FOR SHISHO YAKUMO, OF COURSE.
A GEN-UINE OKYO.
SQUINT

IZZAT SO?
THANK YOU.
POP HAD A GREAT TIME TALKING TO YOU LAST NIGHT.
HAVEN'T SEEN HIM LAUGH THAT HARD IN A WHILE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK I WAS MISSING?
MY ONE FAILURE IN LIFE.
YOU KNOW ...
I'VE ASKED SHISHO YAKUMO TO TAKE ME ON AS AN APPRENTICE MANY TIMES. HE ALWAYS REFUSED.
SMILE
YOU MUST HAVE SOMETHING I DON'T, RIGHT?
HOW'S KONATSU?

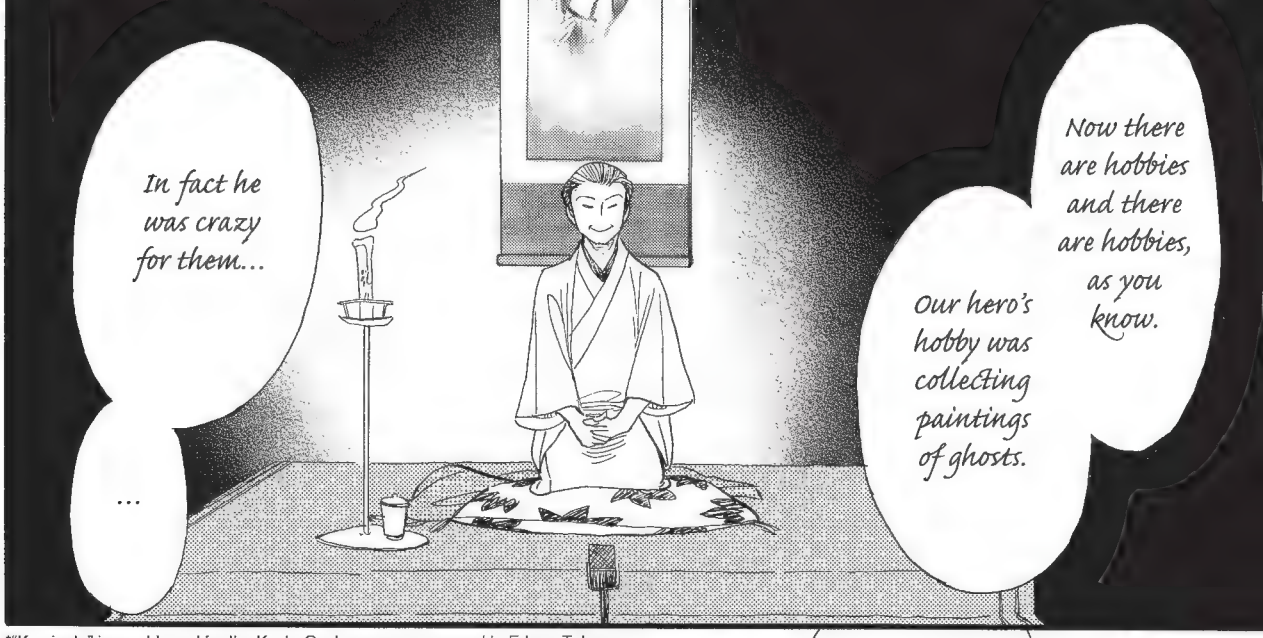

SHE'S A CUTIE, HUH?
I SPENT A LOT OF TIME IN THAT HOUSE PLEADING WITH SHISHO YAKUMO.
EVEN RENTED A PLACE NEARBY.
YOU KNOW SIS?

TO THINK THAT YOU LIVE IN THAT HOUSE WITH THEM...
IT DRIVES ME CRAZY WITH JEAL-OUSY.
BUT MORE, TOO. SUKEROKU'S DAUGHTER. A LIVING LEGEND.


WISH I HAD THAT KIND OF LUCK!
JEALOUSY? I'M THE JEALOUS ONE HERE.
BORN THE SON OF A RAKUGO SHISHO!

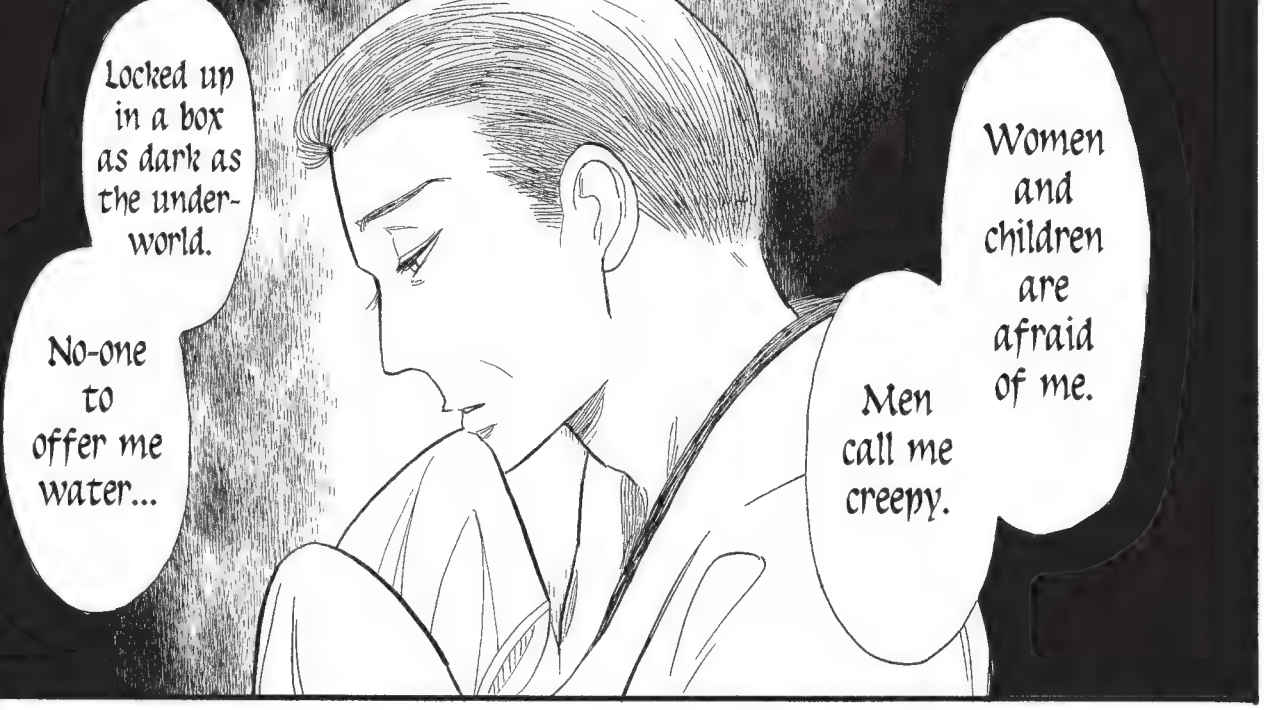
YOU GOT ME. I DON'T JUST LIVE FOR ME ANYMORE.
WHAT I DO REFLECTS ON HIM TOO.
TRYING TO PROVOKE ME? NOT INTERESTED.
WISH I COULD FIGHT, BUT COUNT ME OUT.
NOT YOU!
THEN AGAIN, SHISHO YAKUMO TOOK ME ON,
NYAH HIT IT
YOTA!
YESSIR!
FUNNY KID, THIS ONE...
SNORT
TETO
TENG TEKO
TENG
TON TON
T'TON
IT'S ALMOST SHOWTIME!
WHY ARE YOU WANDERING AROUND WITH MY HAORI JACKET?
YOU BLOCKHEAD!
YESSIR!

TON
T'TON
TEKE-TENG
YEAHHH
YAKU-MOOO
YAKU-MOOOO
TE-TE-TENG
TENG
TENG
TON TON T'TON
TEKO TUKU TENG
TENG TENG
Thank you, thank you.
They didn't tell me it would be this hot in here.
HAW HAW HAW
Won't be needing this.
FIDGET FIDGET
GOOD CROWD TONIGHT. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
Now.
What this night needs is a cooler tale...


Now there are hobbies and there are hobbies, as you know.
Our hero's hobby was collecting paintings of ghosts.
In fact he was crazy for them...
...

*"Kamigata" is an old word for the Kyoto-Osaka area, as opposed to Edo or Tokyo.

YOU KNOW THIS WAS ORIGINALLY A KAMIGATA* STORY? ONE OF MY FATHER'S FAVORITES.
A MAN IN AN ANTIQUE SHOP BUYS A PAINTING OF A GHOST THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A GENUINE OKYO...
THEN THE FUNNY PART: THE GHOST COMES OUT AND TELLS HIM THE TRUTH.
MY FATHER DID IT KAMIGATA-STYLE. STUMBLING, SLOPPY GHOST. GUARANTEED CROWD-PLEASER.
SHISHO YAKUMO TOOK THAT AND ADDED MORE. SENSUALITY. MELANCHOLY.
A WHOLE NEW TAKE.
MY FATHER LOVED THE RESULT.


Locked up in a box as dark as the underworld.
No-one to offer me water...
Women and children are afraid of me.
Men call me creepy.

LIKE BEING IN THE UNDERWORLD YOURSELF.
GIVES YOU CHILLS, RIGHT?
BRR...
3,1"
3,
SHIVER

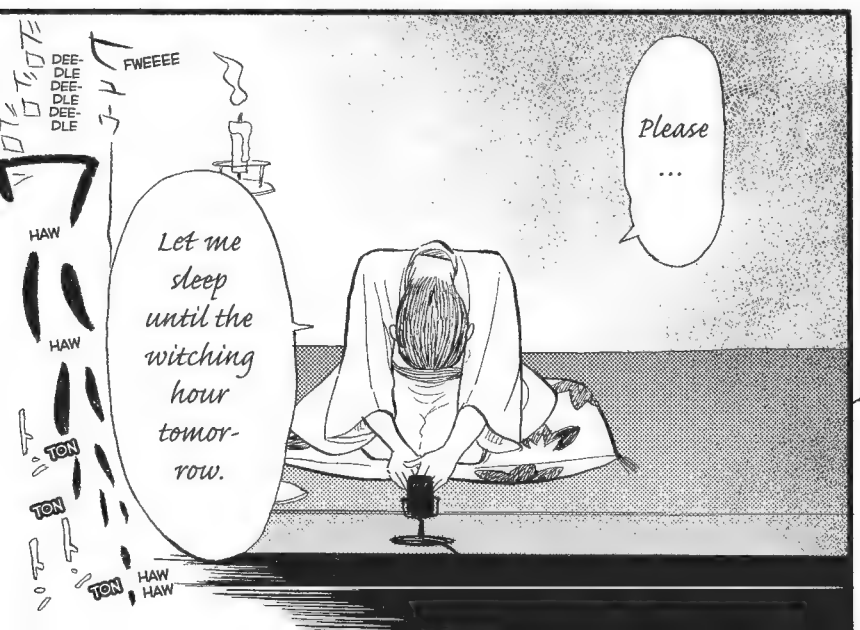
HERE COMES THE GOOD PART.
THE GHOST USED TO BE A GEISHA.
THE MORE SHE DRINKS, THE MORE SHE FLIRTS.
TO BRING THAT TO LIFE... WELL, IT TAKES A TRUE ARTIST.

Just a sip, then...
AHH ぱぁ…
Delicious!
Er... If you'd like...
I could sing us a song?
A song! Yes, please!
Whatever song you like!

YOU SEE THAT? THE WAY HE MOVES?
SHISHO YAKUMO'S WOMEN HAVE REAL EROS.
ESPECIALLY THE ONES WITH SHADY PASTS.
I COULD NEVER PULL THIS PERFORMANCE OFF...
TON T'TON
TE-TE-TE-TENG
T'T'TON
TEXT
I'd just look like a drag queen.

You ...
hand in hand ...
and me ...
To-geth-er all the way ...
to hell ...

WELL, ACTU-ALLY...
I WISH I COULD SLEEP WITH A WOMAN LIKE THAT...
SIGH
I WISH I COULD PER-FORM LIKE THAT...
BLUSH


DEE-DLE DEE-DLE DEE-DLE
FWEEEE
HAW
HAW
TON
TON
TON
HAW HAW
Let me sleep until the witching hour tomor-row.
Please ...

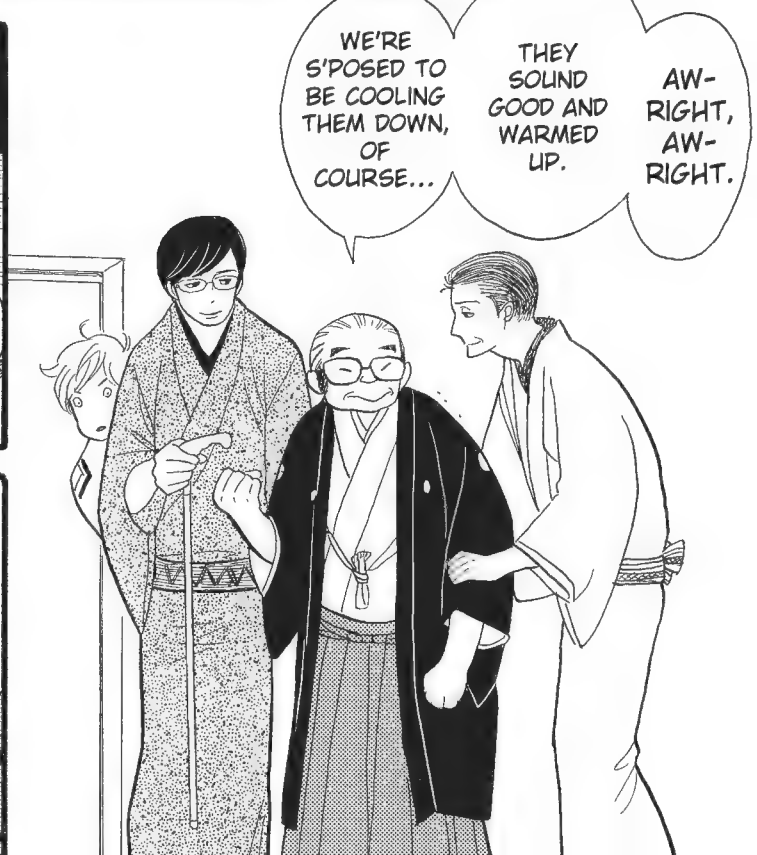
HEH HEH
HUH?
...IS WHAT HIS ART MAKES YOU THINK. HE'S THAT GOOD.

SHISHO YAKU-MO:
This heat...
A MAG-NIFICENT PERFOR-MANCE.
YOU TRULY ARE THE SHISHO.
DON'T SAY THAT IN FRONT OF YOUR FATHER.
FROWN

SHISHO BANSAI'S ON IN FIVE!
Missed my chance

YO-TARO.
GET OUT OF THE WAY.
Who ya think you're talking to?
Just relax

THAT'S MY SEAT.


AW-RIGHT, AW-RIGHT.
THEY SOUND GOOD AND WARMED UP.
WE'RE S'POSED TO BE COOLING THEM DOWN, OF COURSE...

LOOK AT HIM...
LIKE AN EXCITED LITTLE BOY!
Hee hee.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU LOOK DOWN.
JUST THINKING...
ABOUT SHISHO BANSAI.

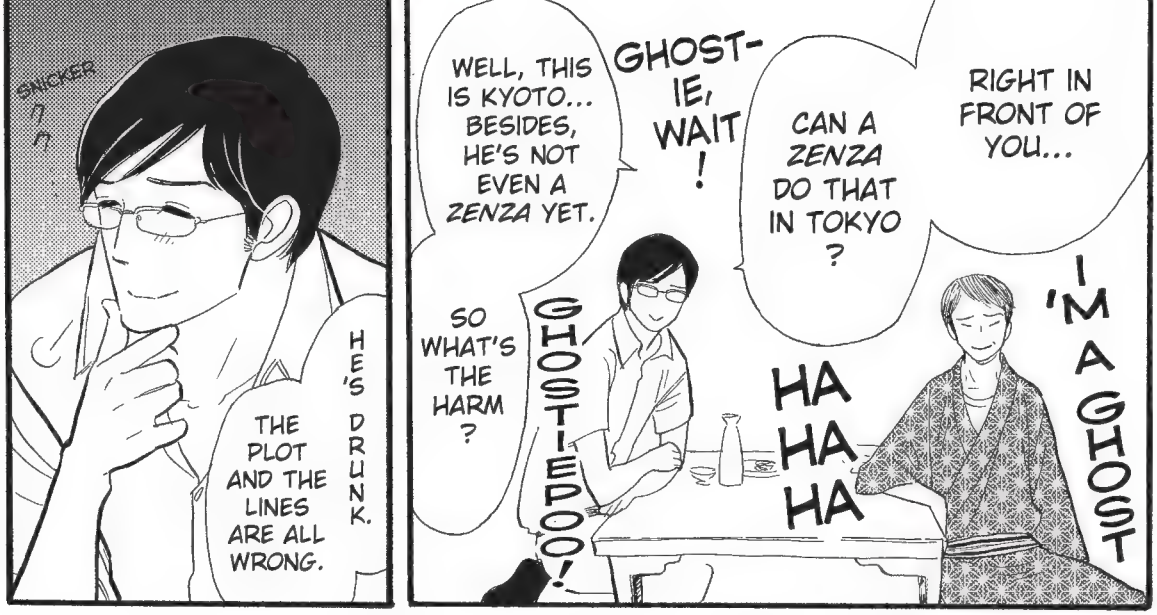
YOU WERE RIGHT.
HE DOESN'T SEEM VERY WELL.
... YES.
IF HE HADN'T INSISTED, I WOULDN'T HAVE LET HIM ON STAGE TODAY.
HE'S ALREADY TURNED IN FOR THE EVENING.
I DON'T LIKE TO SAY IT, BUT...
THIS MIGHT BE THE LAST TIME WE CAN DO THIS.
HE STUMBLES ON WORDS NOW, HIS VOICE DOESN'T CARRY...
HE JUST CAN'T PERFORM LIKE HE USED TO.
RAKUGO ARTISTS ARE ONLY HUMAN.
THE SAME FATE AWAITS YOU AND ME.
I KNOW. I KNOW.

LOSING JUST ONE PERSON CAN HURT SO MUCH...
RAKUGO'S A CRIMINAL TRADE, REALLY.
WHEN YOU GO, YOUR ART AND EVERYTHING ELSE GOES WITH YOU.
AND NOT JUST PEOPLE.
TOWNS CHANGE. CUSTOMS CHANGE.
THE HEART OF RAKUGO, DRIFTING AWAY.
SOME PEOPLE THESE DAYS HAVEN'T EVEN HEARD OF YOSHIWARA, OR A LONG-HOUSE.
I HATE TO EVEN THINK OF IT.
BUT WHAT WILL RAKUGO BE IN TEN, TWENTY YEARS?
THERE ARE STILL SOME OF US LEFT TODAY.
COZY LITTLE ARTS LIKE OURS DON'T EXIST IN A VACUUM.
WHEN THEY STOP BEING PART OF DAILY LIFE, THEY'RE FIN-ISHED.
AND THAT'S FINE.

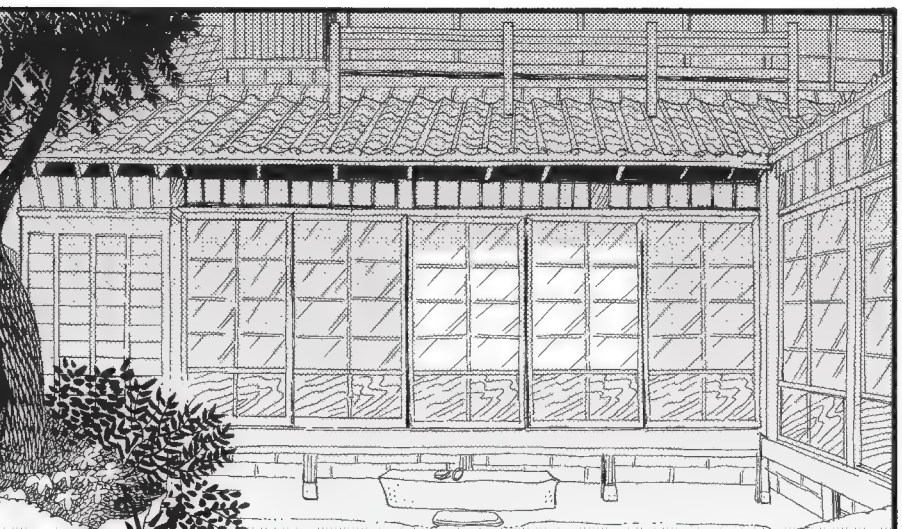
WHAT ?!
SHI-SHO!
SHI-SHO!
SO WHY NOT GO OUT IN STYLE?
HEY!
THAT WOULD BE THE COOL THING TO—
SHI-SHO!
HIC!
I gotta favor
t'ask.
HAVE YOU NO SHAME?
TEE HEE
Well, the table over there insisted...
ARE YOU DRUNK?
ARE YOU JOKING?
SO SHE THOUGHT MAYBE...
EEK
THAT OLD LADY'S A BIG FAN OF YOURS.
BUT SHE COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE SHOW TODAY.

SO I WAS THINKING...
ヒック
HIC
I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT! AND I TOLD HER SO.
BUT SHE WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.
Maybe you'd let me do it instead?
HUH?
WHY?
IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT OTHER-WISE.
WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?
KOFF

YES!
わはーっ
Really?
He said yes!
"THE OKYO GHOST," I SUPPOSE?
FINE. GO AHEAD.
I'LL MAKE YA LAUGH! THAT I PROMISE!
I KNOW I'M JUST AN AP-PRENTICE, BUT...
ドンドン
D'DON!
ALL RIGHT.
ヒッ
HIC
Yeah, buddy?
Hey, antique guy!
キャっ
GLEE
キャっ
GLEE
Ha ha ha
UNBE-LIEV-ABLE.

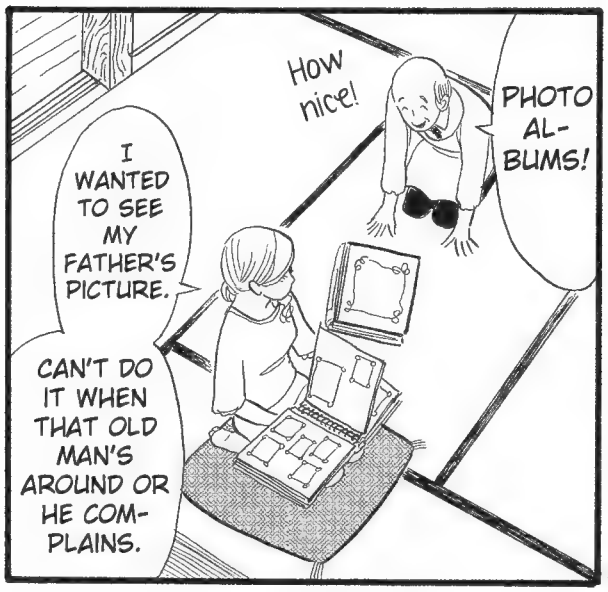

SNICKER
HE'S DRUNK.
THE PLOT AND THE LINES ARE ALL WRONG.
I'M A GHOST
RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU...
CAN A ZENZA DO THAT IN TOKYO?
HA HA HA
GHOST-IE, WAIT!
WELL, THIS IS KYOTO... BESIDES, HE'S NOT EVEN A ZENZA YET.
SO WHAT'S THE HARM?
GHOSTIEPOO!

HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
SUCH A WEIRD KID.
BUT HE DOES MAKE YOU LAUGH.
HAW
HAW
HAW

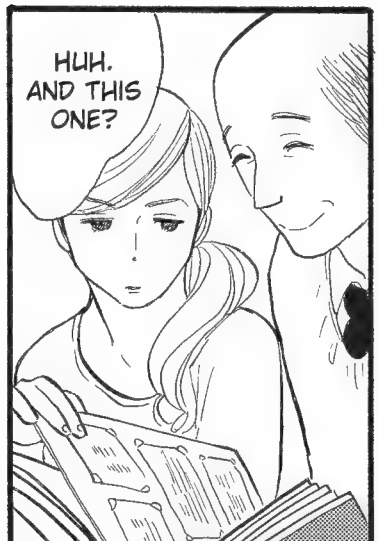


TE-TENG!

PAR-
DON
ME.
WHAT
HAVE
YOU GOT
THERE?
MAT-
SUDA.

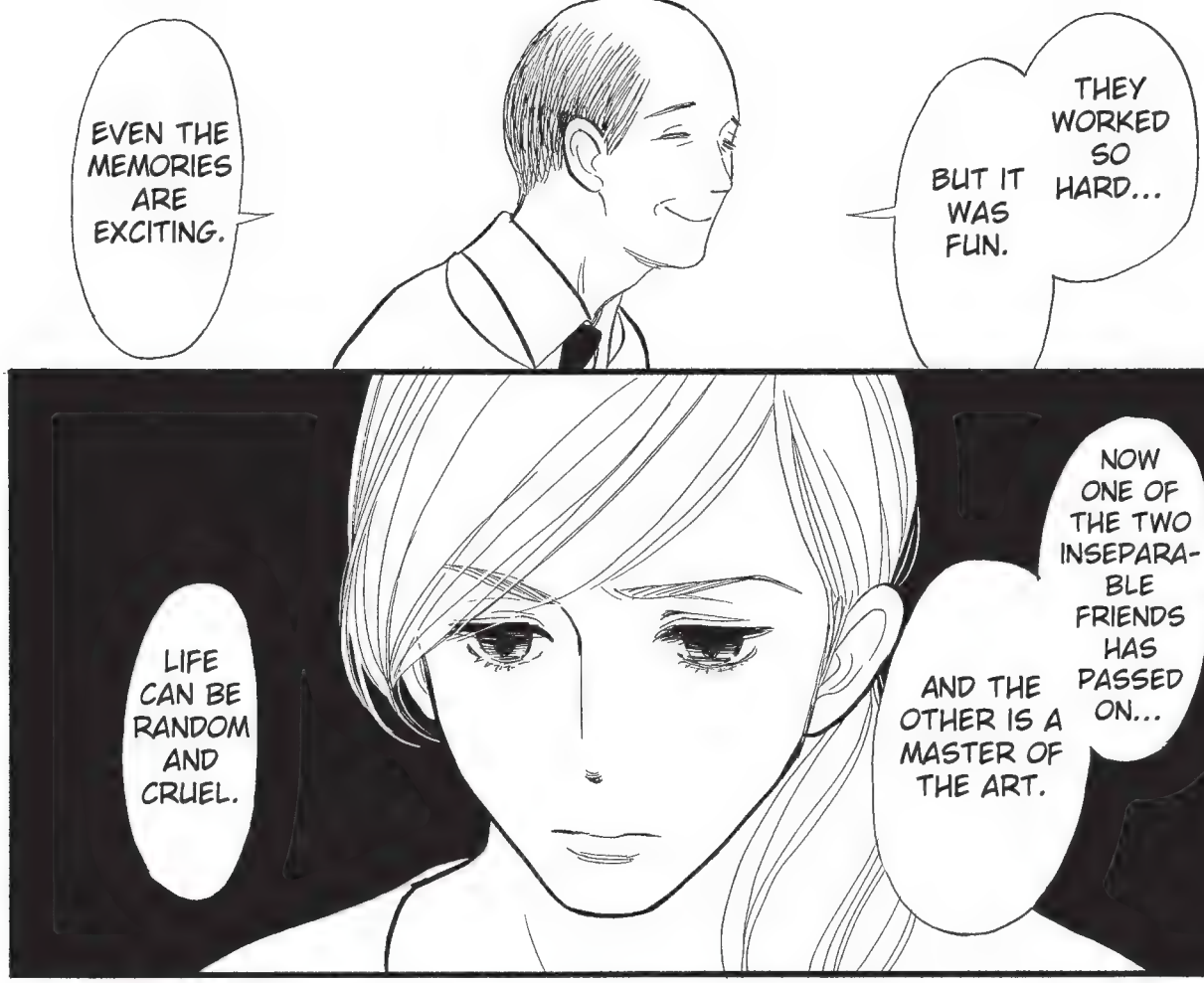

How
nice!
PHOTO
AL-
BUMS!
I
WANTED
TO SEE
MY
FATHER'S
PICTURE.
CAN'T DO
IT WHEN
THAT OLD
MAN'S
AROUND OR
HE COM-
PLAINS.

OH, THE
MEMO-
RIES...
WHERE
DID YOU
FIND
THESE?
THIS IS
THE
PREVIOUS
YAKUMO'S
HOUSE.
I
LIVED
THERE
TOO.


HUH.
AND THIS
ONE?

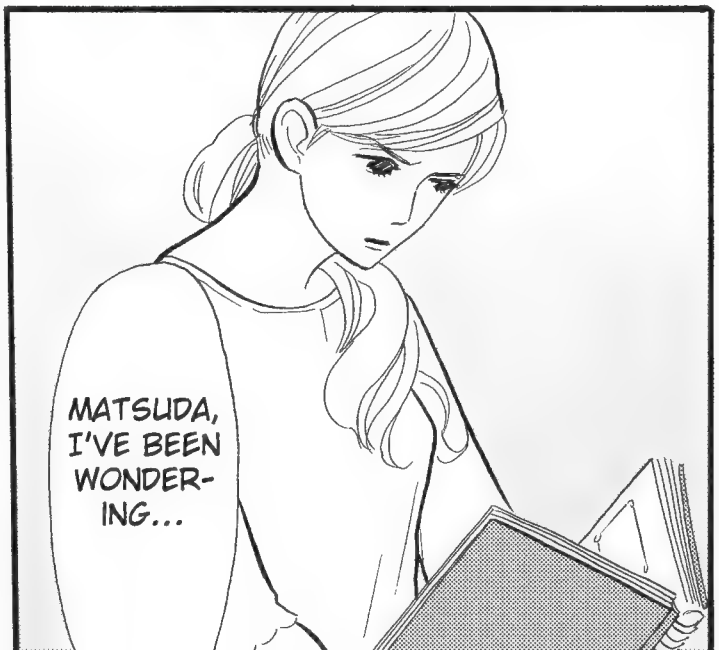
14, maybe
15?
THIS IS
WHEN
THEY
WERE
BOTH
STILL
JUST
ZENZAS.
SHISHO
YAKUMO
WAS
"KIKUHIKO."
AND
SUKEROKU
WAS
"HATSU-
TARO."

THEY'RE TOGETHER IN EVERY PHOTO.
WERE THEY CLOSE?
THIS WAS A DEER PLAY.
A DEER PLAY?
A *SHIKA SHIBAI*. A *SHIBAI*, PLAY, PUT ON BY RAKUGO ARTISTS, *HANASHIKA*. *SHIKA*, DEER; *HANASHIKA*... YOU SEE?
THIS WAS *BENTEN THE THIEF*. SHISHO YAKUMO WAS BENTEN, AND SUKEROKU WAS NANGO RIKIMARU.
THEY WERE A RIOT.
STARTED ON THE SAME DAY AT THE SAME AGE, SHARED THE SAME DREAM...
OF COURSE THEY WERE CLOSE.
CLOSE?
THEY WERE INSEPA-RABLE.
ALWAYS IN TROUBLE WITH THE PREVIOUS YAKUMO.


EVEN THE MEMORIES ARE EXCITING.
THEY WORKED SO HARD...
BUT IT WAS FUN.
LIFE CAN BE RANDOM AND CRUEL.
NOW ONE OF THE TWO INSEPARA-BLE FRIENDS HAS PASSED ON...
AND THE OTHER IS A MASTER OF THE ART.

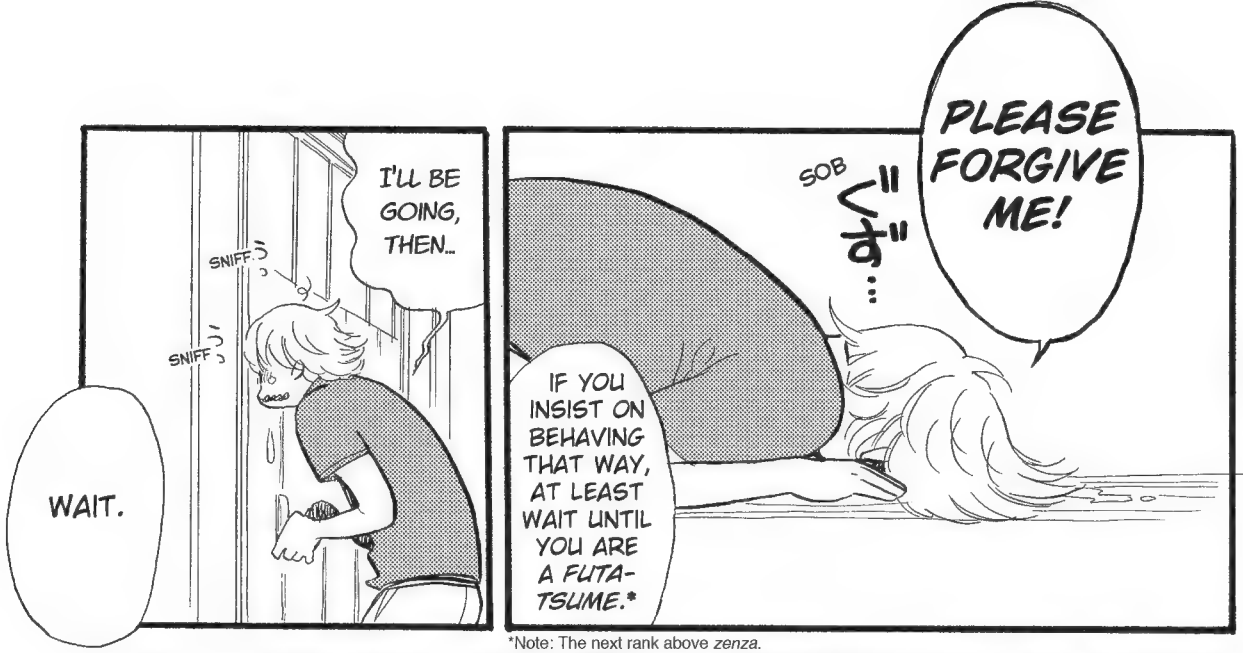
WAS THE YAKUMO NAME REALLY SUPPOSED TO GO TO MY FATHER?

KO-NATSU ...

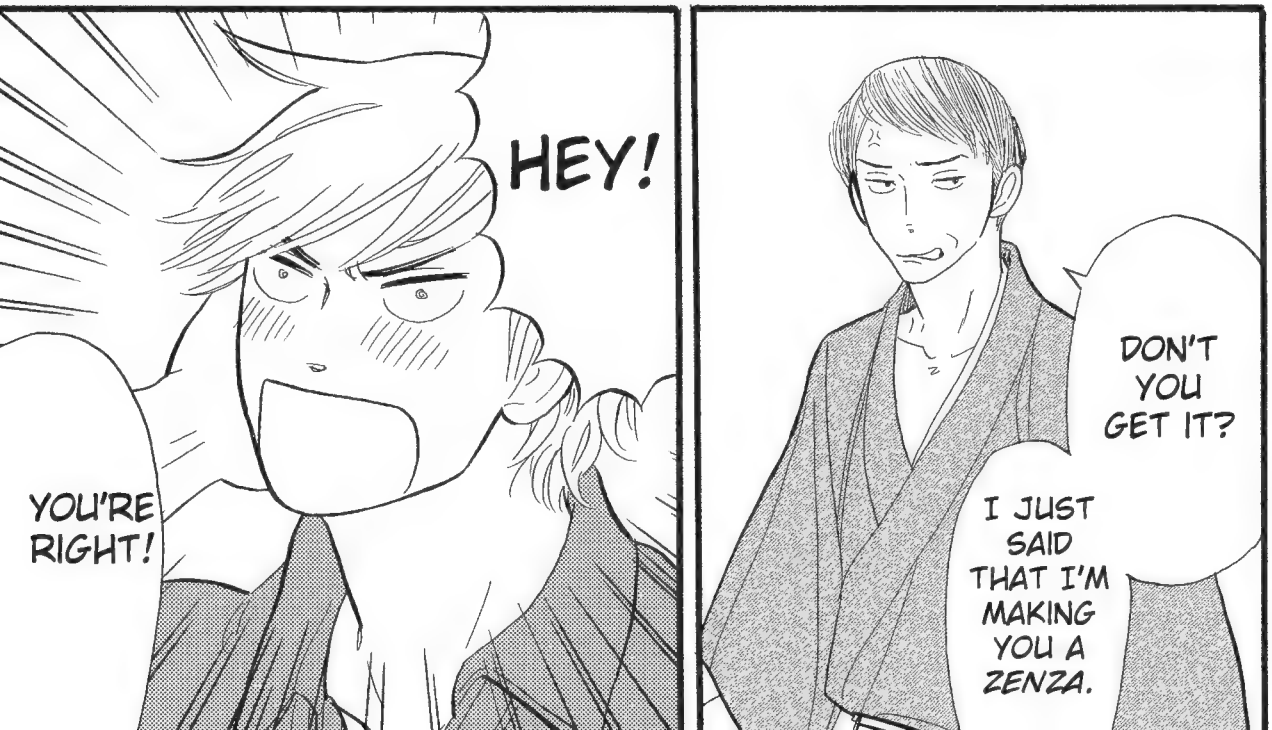

MATSUDA, I'VE BEEN WONDER-ING...

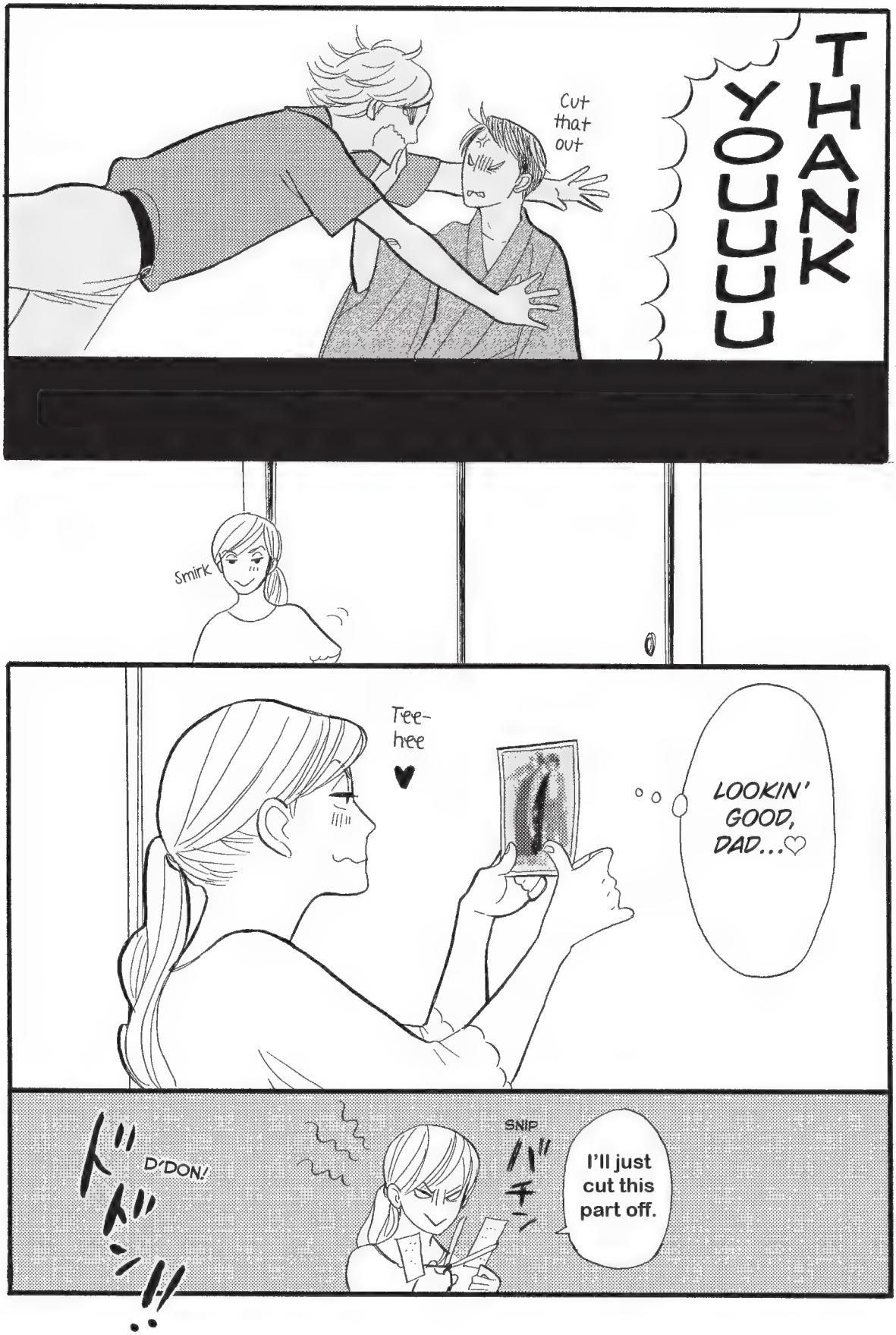
I JUST WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH.
WHETHER THAT OLD MAN REALLY...
KO-NAT-SU...
WHAT GOOD WILL THINKING LIKE THAT DO?
IT WON'T BRING YOUR FATHER BACK.
WE'RE BACK
SS-SHLAM
Sis, your pres-
...Okay.
Huh?!
VACA-TION'S OVER.
TIDY THAT UP.

M-
MAY I COME IN?
text
"Get out"...
Sigh
"Dpor dead"
...
Y-
YES, SIR ...
UH-OH
YO-
I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT... PER-FORMANCE.
TARO.
LATER. MY ROOM.
YOU WILL NEVER DO THAT AGAIN. EVEN IF I AM NOT AROUND.
LISTEN CLOSE-LY.
THAT KIND OF RAKUGO DISGUSTS ME.
YOU WERE DRUNK. YOU HAD NO TECHNIQUE, NO CONTROL. ONLY IDEAS YOU TOOK FROM ME.
A ZENZA IS STILL IN TRAIN-ING.
TO PRESUME TO PERFORM LIKE THAT IS UNTHINK-ABLE.
UNAC-CEPT-ABLE.
YESSIR.




*Note: The next rank above *zenza*.

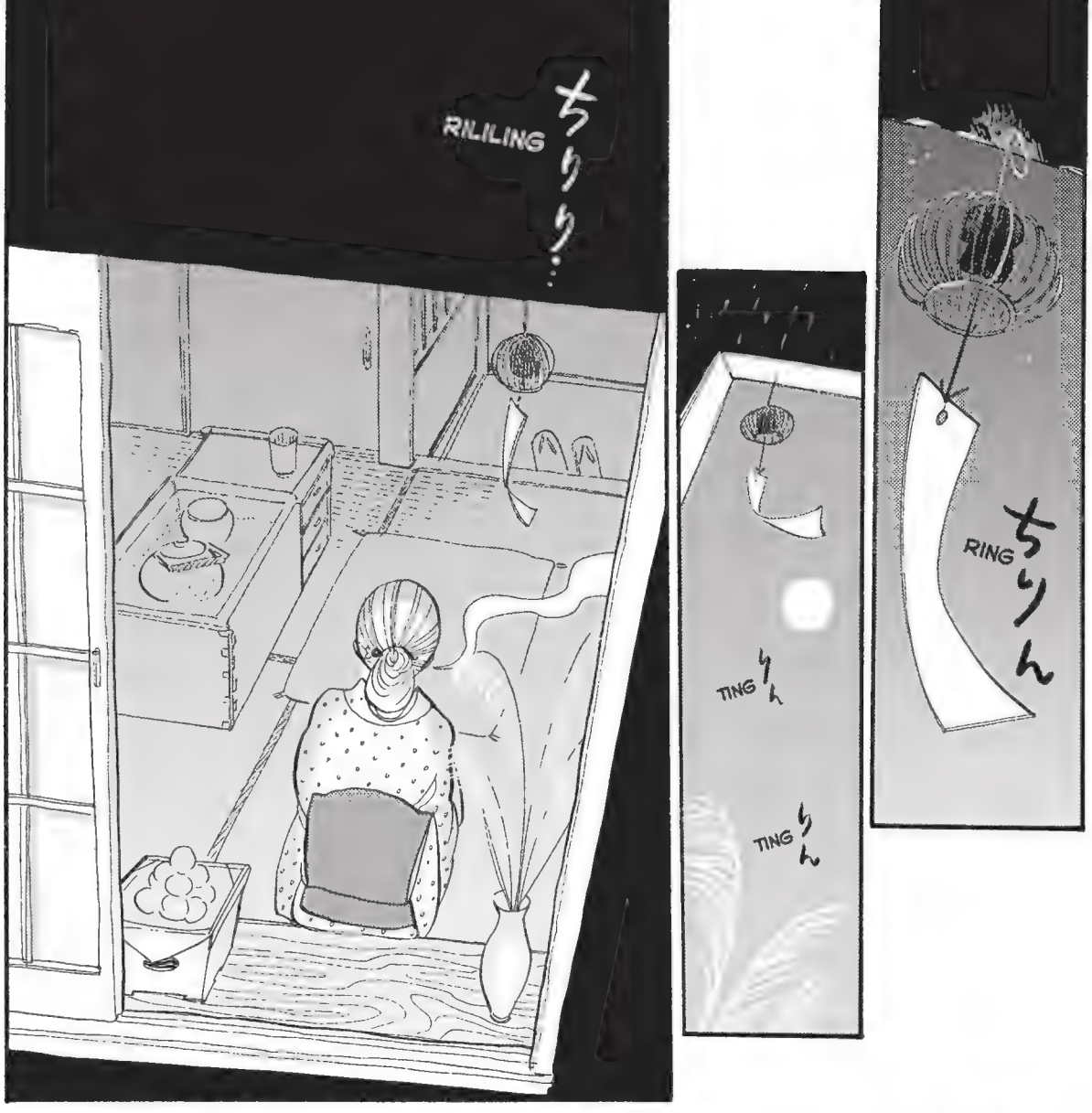



THANK YOUUU
Cut that out
Smirk
Tee-hee
LOOKIN' GOOD, DAD...♡
D'DON!
SNIP
I'll just cut this part off.

YOTARO'S ODYSSEY: 3

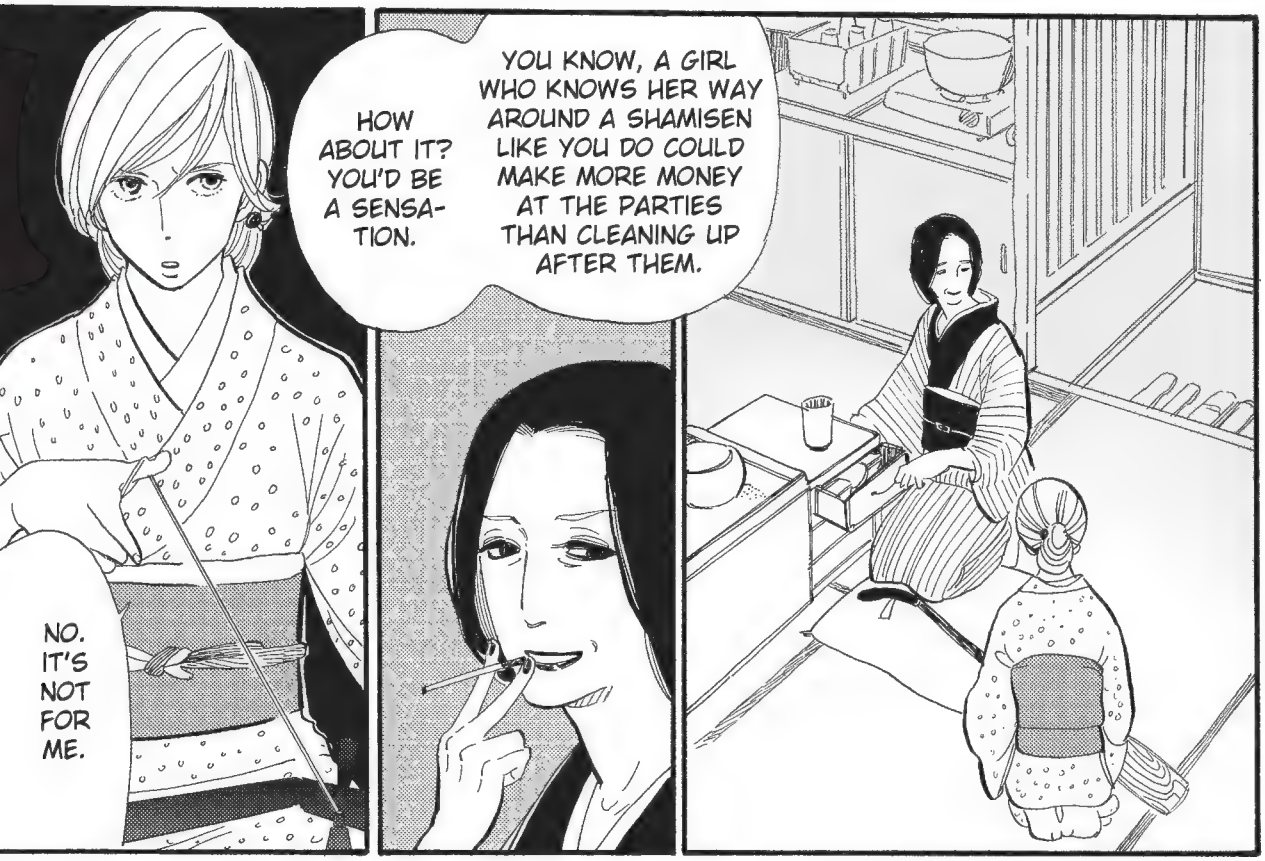
# DESCENDING STORIES

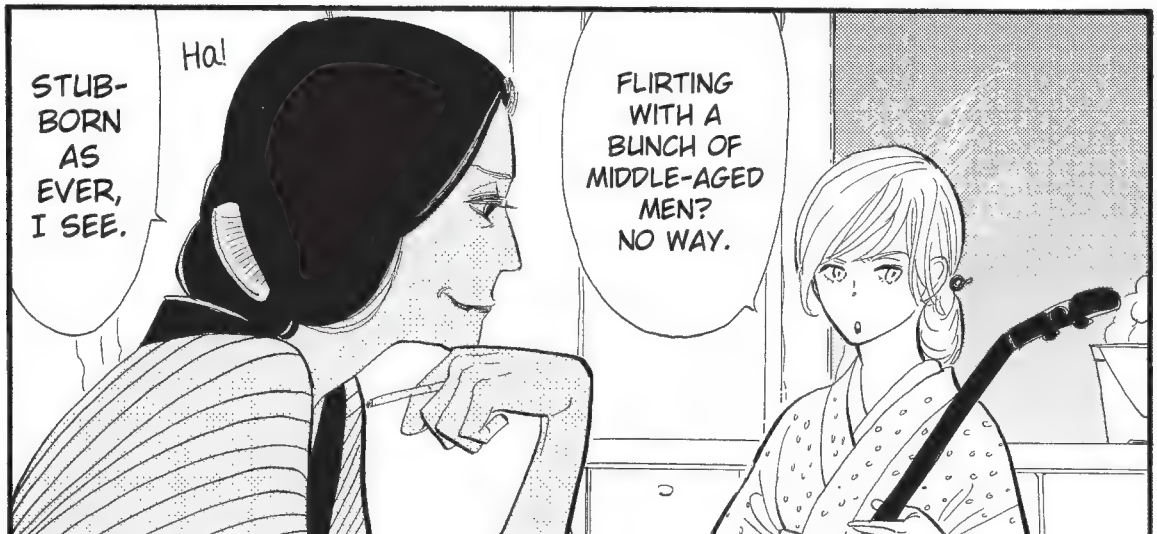
SHOWA
GENROKU
RAKUGO
SHINJU


RILILING ちりり…
RING ちりん
TING りん
TING りん

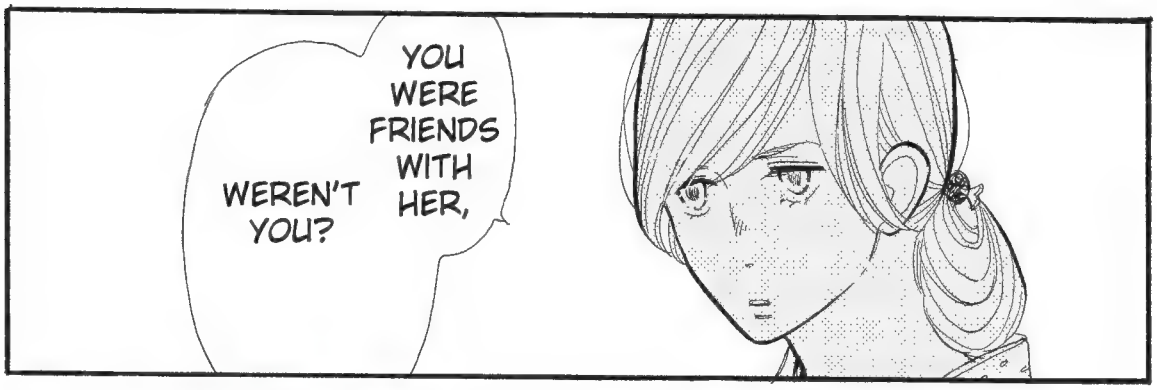
KO-NAT-SU?
YOU STILL HERE?

OEI ...
MY LUCKY NIGHT. CAN YOU FIX THIS FOR ME?
ONE OF THE GEISHAS LEFT IT BEHIND.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOT A BROKEN STRING.


YOU KNOW, A GIRL WHO KNOWS HER WAY AROUND A SHAMISEN LIKE YOU DO COULD MAKE MORE MONEY AT THE PARTIES THAN CLEANING UP AFTER THEM.
HOW ABOUT IT? YOU'D BE A SENSA-TION.
NO. IT'S NOT FOR ME.

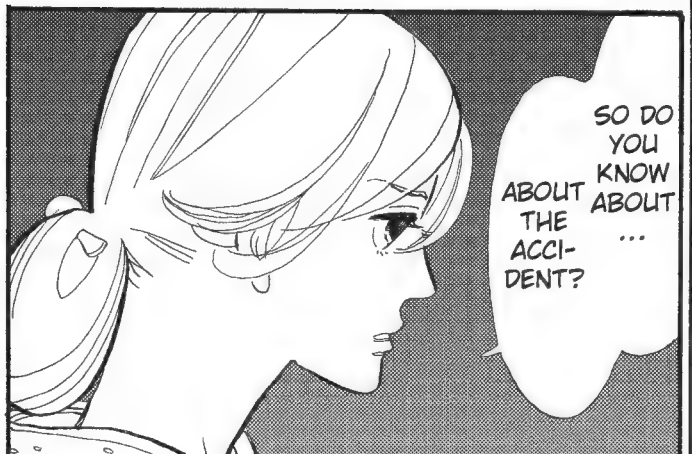

FLIRTING WITH A BUNCH OF MIDDLE-AGED MEN? NO WAY.
Ha!
STUB-BORN AS EVER, I SEE.

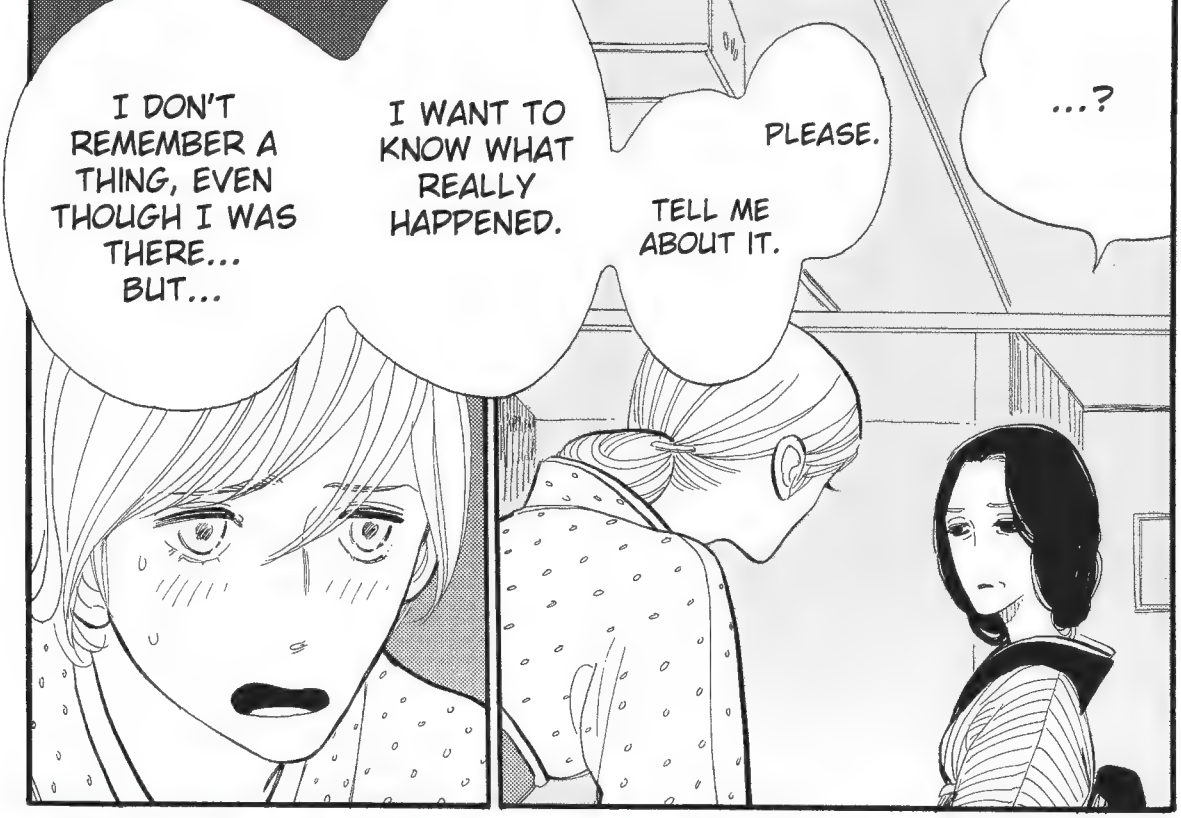
EVEN IN HER YOUTH, MIYOKICHI COULD WRAP MEN AROUND HER FINGER.
YOUR MOTHER WAS THE EXACT OPPOSITE.


YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH HER, WEREN'T YOU?

YOUR FATHER AND YAKUMO, TOO...
I KNEW THEM IN THEIR MIS-BEGOTTEN YOUTH.

WE DID OUR GEISHA TRAINING TOGETHER.
BACK WHEN THIS PLACE WAS A GEISHA HOUSE INSTEAD OF A RESTAU-RANT.
YEP.

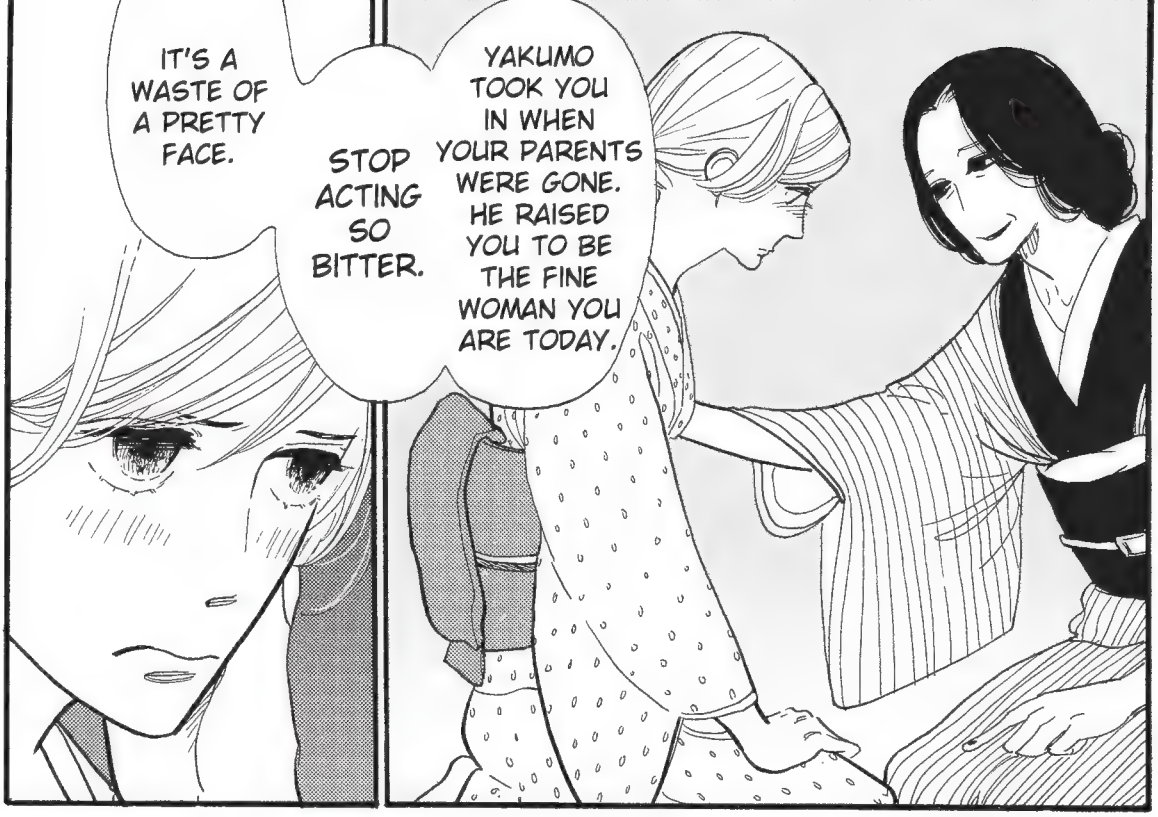

SO DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ...
ABOUT THE ACCI-DENT?


I DON'T REMEMBER A THING, EVEN THOUGH I WAS THERE... BUT...
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.
PLEASE. TELL ME ABOUT IT.
...?

KO-NAT-SU.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT IT THAT NEEDS TO BE EXPOSED. I JUST KNOW IT.

DO YOU THINK THE TWO OF THEM CAN REST IN PEACE WITH YOU LIKE THIS?
THERE'S NOTHING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT IT.
IT WAS JUST A TRAGIC ACCIDENT.

GLARE
KO-NAT-SU!
YOU'RE STILL THINKING ABOUT IT, AREN'T YOU?
YOU CAN'T LET THE PAST TIE YOU UP IN KNOTS.

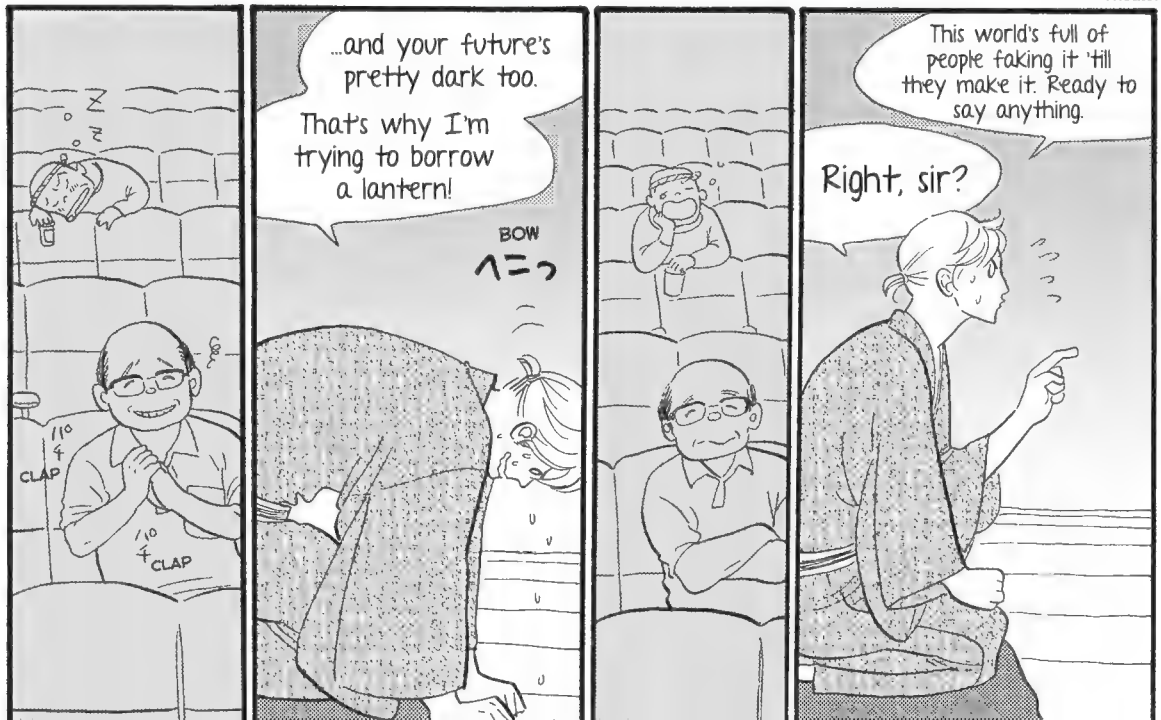

IT'S A WASTE OF A PRETTY FACE.
STOP ACTING SO BITTER.
YAKUMO TOOK YOU IN WHEN YOUR PARENTS WERE GONE. HE RAISED YOU TO BE THE FINE WOMAN YOU ARE TODAY.

I'LL NEVER GET MY REVENGE LIKE THIS.
I WISH I HADN'T BEEN BORN A WOMAN.

BEING BORN A WOMAN... THAT'S JUST FATE.

DON'T BE SILLY.

*Theater Uchikutei


...and your future's pretty dark too.
That's why I'm trying to borrow a lantern!
BOW
This world's full of people faking it 'till they make it. Ready to say anything.
Right, sir?
CLAP
CLAP

ガン BAM
ガン BAM
Yota!
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER COMPLETE FAILURE.
ぎりりり TEXT
てけとん TEKE-TENG
てけとんとん TEKE-TON TON
WHOOPS
But don't forget to turn over the cush-ion!
Don't let it get to you!
Hot tea comin' through!
どすっ STOMP
どすっ STOMP
どすっ STOMP
Comin' through!

SHISHO NEKO-SUKE, YOUR TEA.
YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT...

Not your age, your height.
Just turned 22
You're a big one, eh?
キャっ
CHATTER
キャっ
CHATTER

NICE WORK!
Oh?
BUT THIS GUY'S WITH SHISHO YAKUMO NOW.
NOT MANY YOUNG-STERS INTO RAKUGO THESE DAYS.

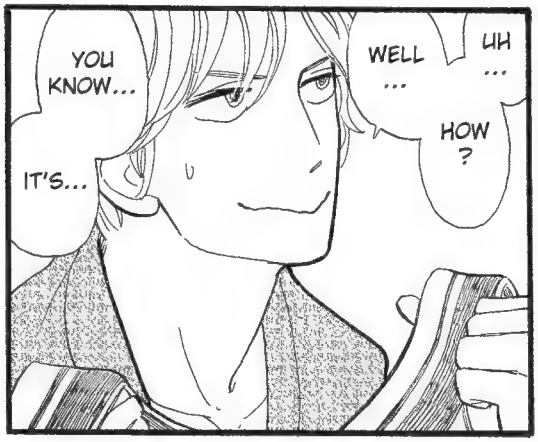
GO SHOW HIM IN AND THEN MAKE HIM SOME TEA.
SHISHO TERU-TERU'S JUST ARRIVED.
IT'S FINE.
SORRY, SORRY...

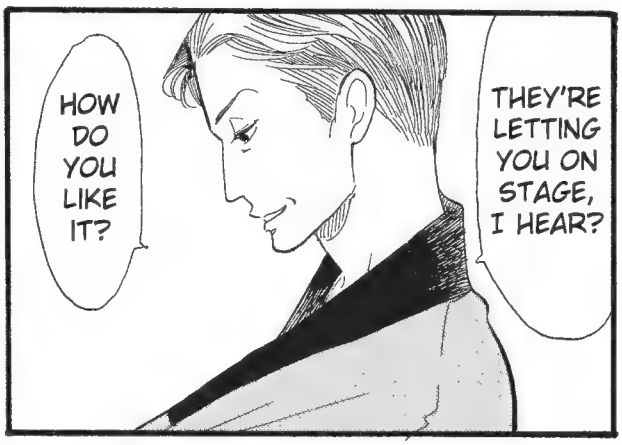
Trials of an ap-pren-tice, huh?
Yota!
Hey, Yota!

Work!

NO-ONE LIKES IT THAT STRONG.
HE TOLD ME HE LIKES IT STRONG.
TOO MUCH TEA.
SPLISH
びしゃ
EASY...
THAT'S WHAT ZENZAS DO.
WE'RE HERE TO MAKE THEIR LIFE EASY.
BUT YOU CAN'T ASK THEM. ASK ME INSTEAD.
STRONG, WEAK, BOILING, LUKEWARM, PLAIN WATER... THEY ALL WANT SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
ROG-ER!
MAKE SURE SHISHO TERUTERU GETS CHANGED.
I'LL COVER THE DRUMS.
OH, AND IT'S AL-MOST TIME FOR THE INTER-MIS-SION.
HERE!
THIS SHOULD DO IT.
Taste it your-self later.

WE SAW EACH OTHER THIS MORNING.
Shisho Yakumo! IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
!!
SHISHO YAKUMO HAS ARRIVED!
TEXT
フ...

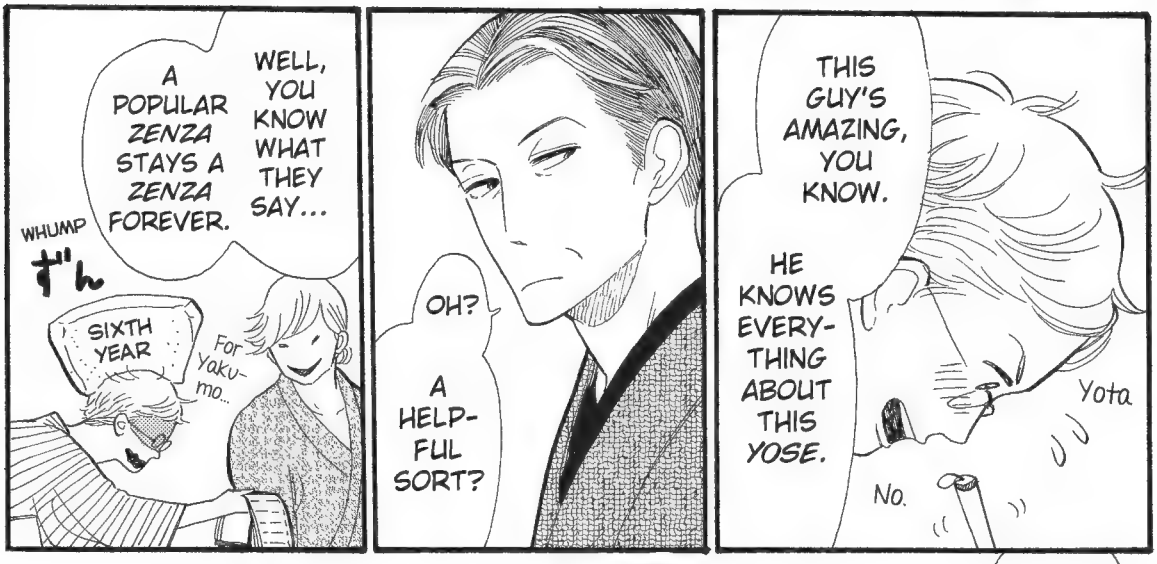

YOU KNOW...
IT'S...
WELL ...
UH ...
HOW ?


HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
THEY'RE LETTING YOU ON STAGE, I HEAR?

SMIRK
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU AT A LOSS BEFORE.
I COULD GET USED TO THIS.

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO BE FUNNY.
IT'S ...
IT'S HARD.

KEEPING MYSELF BUSY HELPS ME FORGET MY MISTAKES...
AM I RIGHT?
EVERYONE'S NICE TO ME, EVEN THE OWNER.
IT'S HARD ON STAGE, BUT FUN BEHIND THE SCENES.


WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...
A POPULAR ZENZA STAYS A ZENZA FOREVER.
WHUMP
ずん
SIXTH YEAR
For Yakumo...
OH?
A HELPFUL SORT?
THIS GUY'S AMAZING, YOU KNOW.
HE KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS YOSE.
Yota
No.

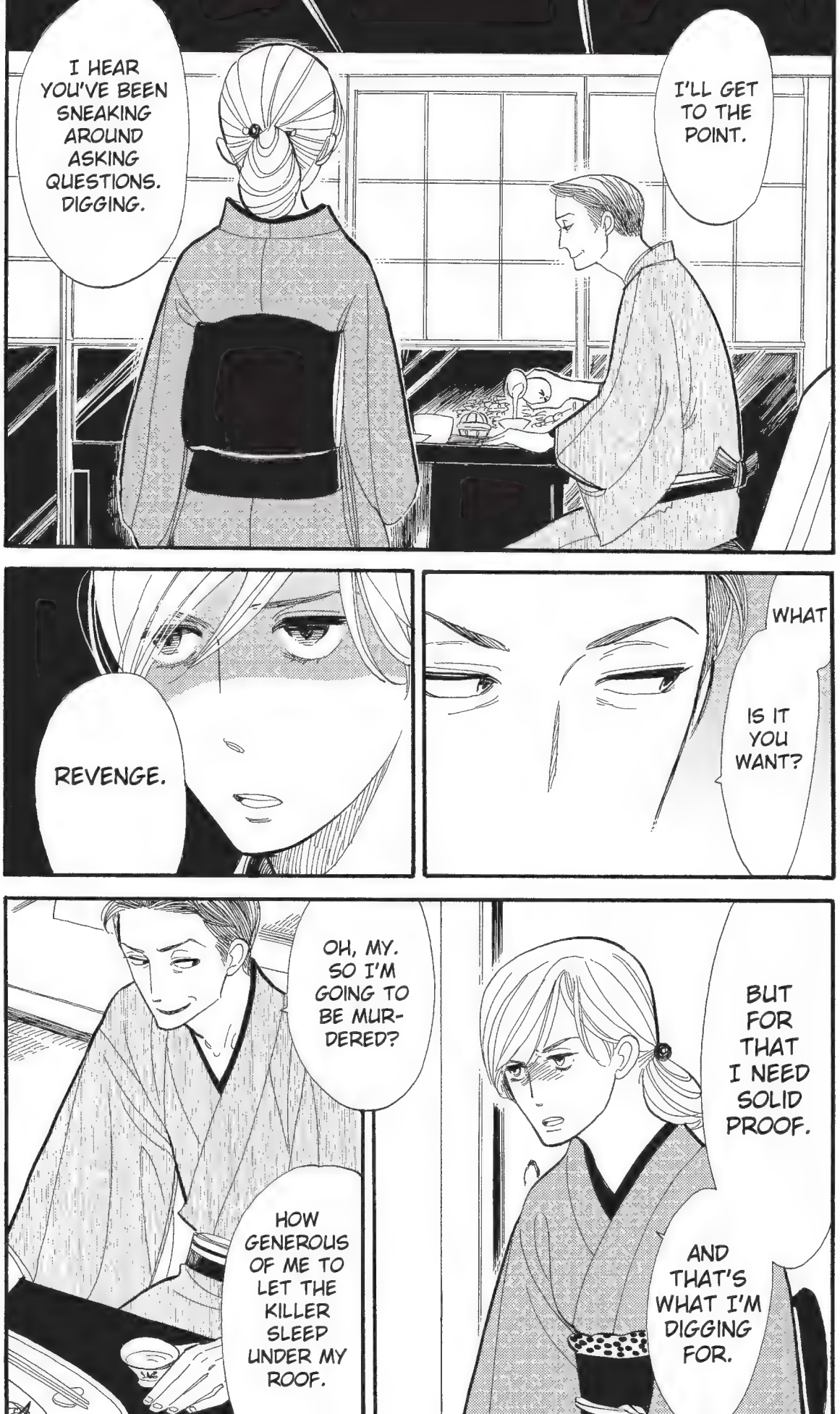
IT'S A DIRTY PROFESSION...
BUT IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN ALWAYS QUIT.
パチン SNAP
EVERYONE CHOOSES THEIR OWN PATH.
THERE'S ALSO RAW TALENT TO CONSIDER.
パチン SNAP

ONE REPLY.
YES-SIR
YEAH, YEAH
GO TIDY UP.
THE INTER-MIS-SION'S ALMOST FIN-ISHED.
NYAH
I'VE GOT TOO MUCH PRIDE FOR THAT.
YOTA ...
I'LL THROW YOU OUT ANY DAY YOU LIKE.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT YOUR FREE-DOM.
CAN YOU SEE THAT HE GETS FED?
I HAVE SOME OTHER BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF. WON'T BE HOME UNTIL LATE.
FLUT-TER
FLUT-TER
ARE YOU FREE AFTER THIS?
ME? UH, YES SIR.
HE JUST CAN'T KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT.
THIS IS TOO MUCH?
Hm ?
OH, NO!
I COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT.
IT'S FAR TOO MUCH.
YOTARO REALLY IS HIS FIRST APPREN-TICE...
SNRT
Can't back out now.

わあ…
MURMUR
YA-KU-MO!
TEE-HEE!
FLIP
CAN'T WAIT UNTIL I'M PERFORMING FOR CROWDS LIKE THIS.
BUZZ
BUZZ
ざわ
MUR-MUR
ざわ
BUZZ
ざわ
MUR-MUR
ざわ
MUR-MUR
ざわ
八雲
*Yakumo
Just fan-tastic!
HA HA HA
Really?
Did you see him last...
LOOK HOW EXCITED THEY GET AT THE SIGHT OF HIS NAME.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. SHISHO YAKUMO'S THE BEST!

*Dining
KO-NA-TSU.
TAKE THIS TO THE CLOVER ROOM, WOULD YOU?
?
SPECIAL REQUEST FROM THE CUSTOM-ER.
WHY ME?
JUST GO AL-READY.
UGH.
OH, THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN.
SOME DROOL-ING OLD HORN-DOG, NO DOUBT.
FOUND OUT MY NAME SOME-HOW...
UGH!
WHAT A DRAG.
RATTLE
EXCUSE ME.
HI THERE.
SNAP
いらっ…

I'M WORKING. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO CHAT.
WE HAVE TO TALK.
YOU'RE AS STUB-BORN AS ME.
STILL THE SILENT TREAT-MENT?
...
I WON'T KEEP YOU LONG.
COME IN AL-READY.
YOUR BOSS SAID IT WAS FINE.
ピシャン
SHH-HLAM
SNICKER
SCARED OF ME?
HMPH
ムスッ


I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN SNEAKING AROUND ASKING QUESTIONS. DIGGING.
I'LL GET TO THE POINT.
REVENGE.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
OH, MY. SO I'M GOING TO BE MURDERED?
HOW GENEROUS OF ME TO LET THE KILLER SLEEP UNDER MY ROOF.
BUT FOR THAT I NEED SOLID PROOF.
AND THAT'S WHAT I'M DIGGING FOR.

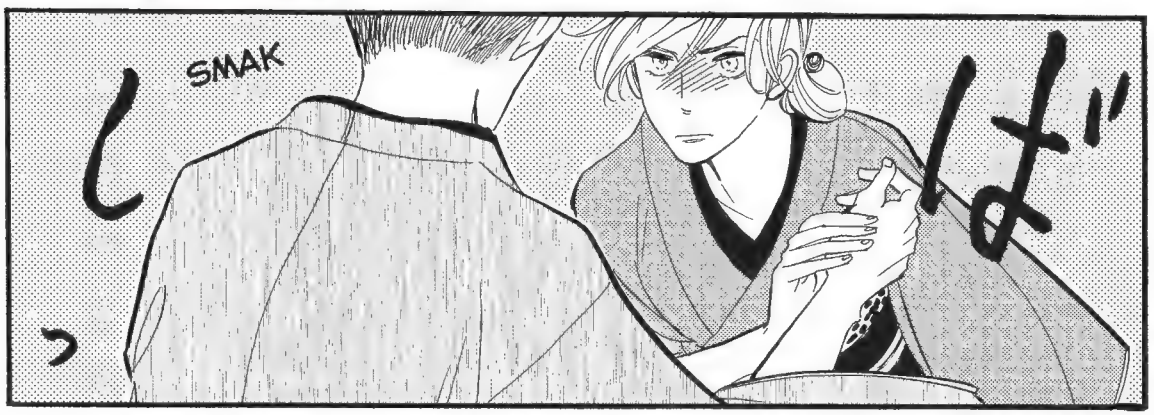
AND UNTIL I DO, I'M NOT LEAVING THAT HOUSE.
I'M GOING TO DE-STROY YOU WITH WHATEVER YOU HATE THE MOST.
NOT NECES-SARILY MURDER.
IF YOU THINK I KILLED YOUR POP, FINE.
IT'S EVEN TRUE, IN A WAY.
KILL ME, LET ME LIVE, I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO FIND PEACE.
SO YOU ADMIT IT?

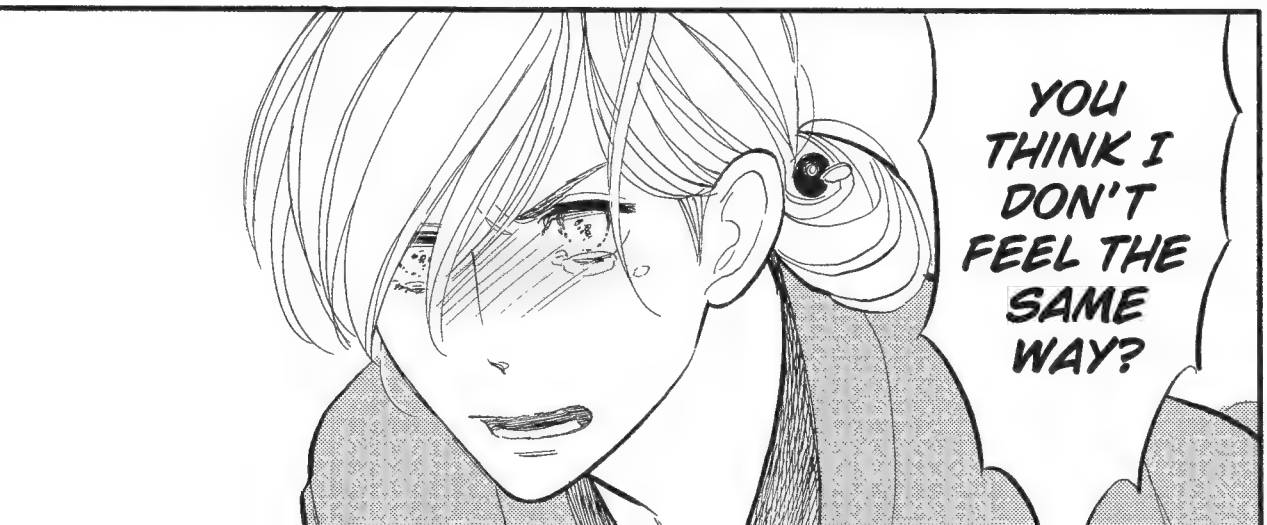
KNOW THAT IT'LL BE OVER MY DEAD BODY.
BUT IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO BECOME A *HANASHIKA* AND SHOW ME UP...
HATE? NO. I'M SAYING IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE.
SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'D HATE THE MOST?
AND SHOULD THEY SOME-HOW MASTER THE ART... WELL, THERE'S NOTHING MORE UNPLEASANT THAN A WOMAN WHO CAN DO A GOOD IMPRES-SION OF A MAN.
THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH TO OVERCOME.
THEY CAN'T ENJOY STUPIDITY, FOR ONE THING.
EVEN IF THEY CAN, THEIR ART DOESN'T DEEPEN AS THEY AGE.
WOMEN CAN'T PERFORM RAKUGO. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS.

I DIDN'T LEARN THIS ART FOR FUN.
AND, I MIGHT ADD, BECOMING A *HANASHIKA* JUST TO GET REVENGE... THE IDEA MAKES ME SICK.
WOMEN FALL IN LOVE...
AND IT DRIVES THEM INSANE.
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL.
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I LOVE RAKUGO TOO?
DAD'S RAKUGO... IT CAN'T JUST DISAPPEAR.

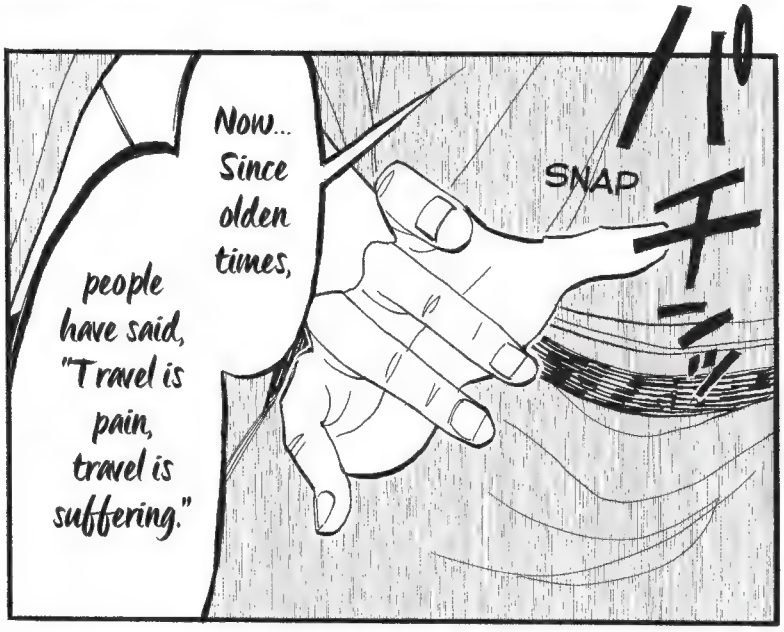
LOOK AT ME.
GLARE
THOSE EYES ...
YOU LOOK JUST LIKE HIM, YOU KNOW.

THE GODS CAN BE CRUEL, CAN'T THEY?
IF ONLY THEY'D LET YOU BE BORN A MAN...


SMAK


YOU THINK I DON'T FEEL THE SAME WAY?

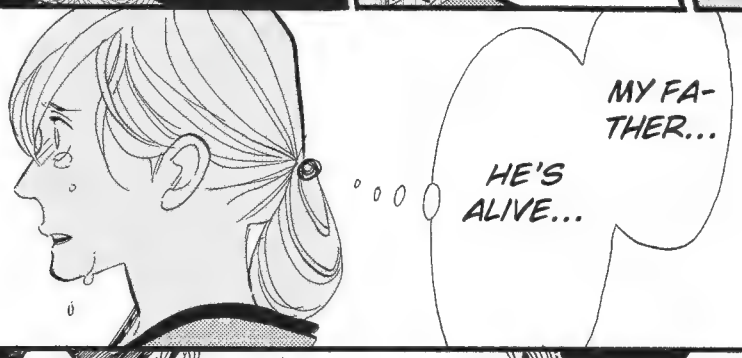
I THINK TO MYSELF SOMETIMES ...
"IF I'D BEEN BORN A WOMAN,
NOTHING WOULD BE THIS EASY."


Now... Since olden times,
people have said, "Travel is pain, travel is suffering."
SNAP

Now these three did everything together. Eat, drink, play. People called them the "Naughty Three."

Three strapping young lads from the fish market, Genbei, Seihachi, and Kiroku, on their way back from seeing the sights in Kanazawa when they kick off their sandals at the Musashiya Inn...

Oi, Ihachi.
Gen, the lady's man! Teng teke teng teke teng!
CLAP
I told you I didn't mind a small room, but it has to be a quiet one.
Oi, Ihachi!
Listen, I'm not kidding around.
Well, getting cut in two's not gonna help!

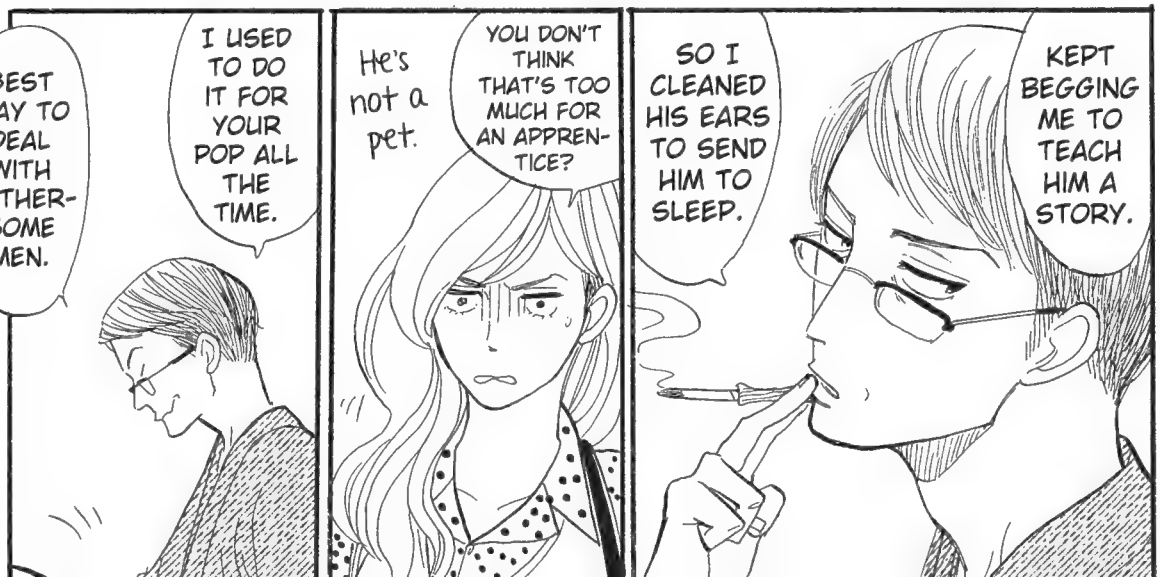

MY FATHER...
HE'S ALIVE...

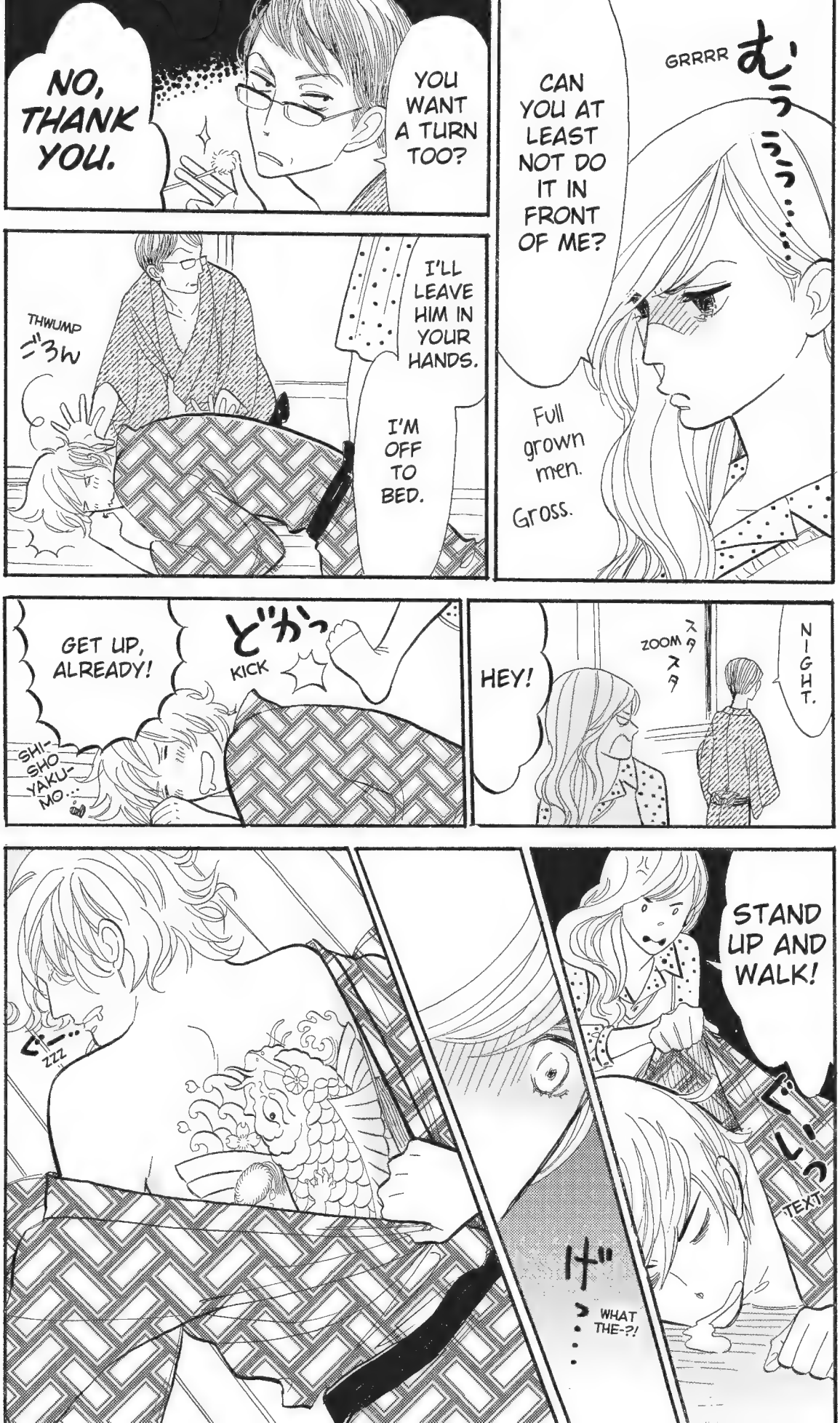
PANT
YOU SEE, KONATSU?
THIS IS YOUR FATHER'S RAKUGO.

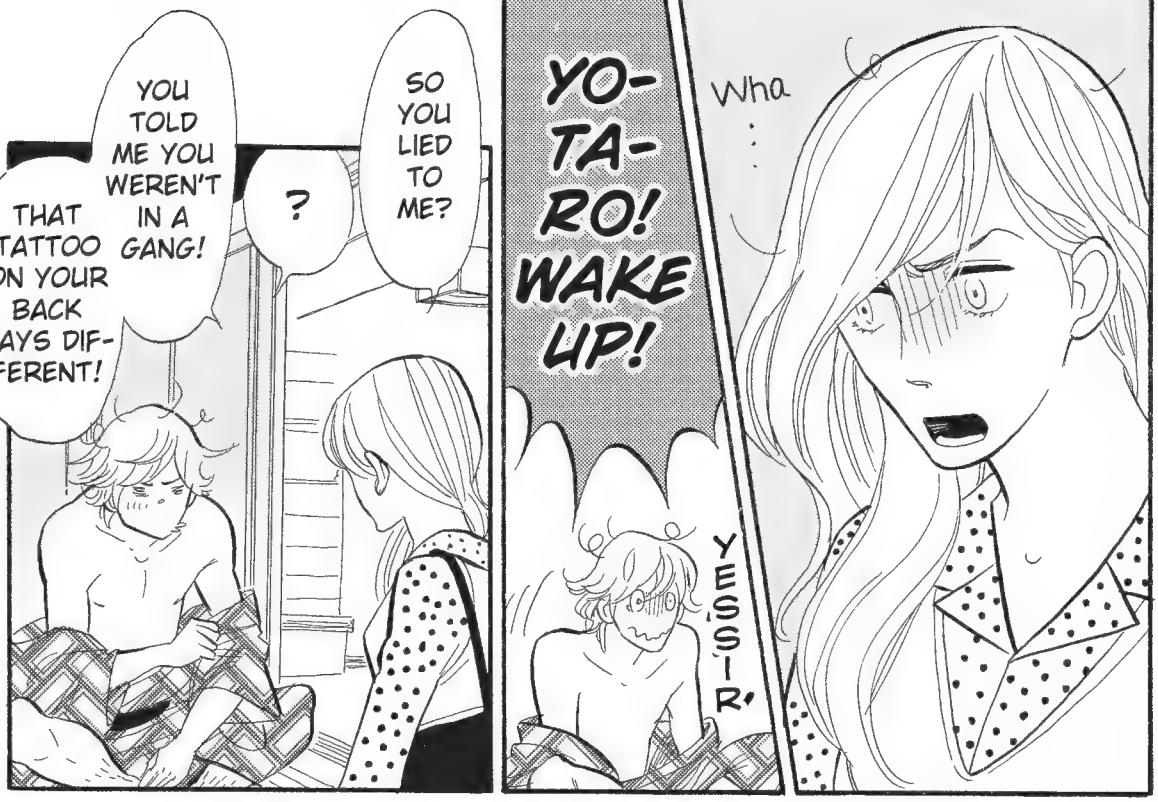
HE LIVES ON IN ME.
JUST LIKE THAT GODLIKE VERSION OF HIM DOES IN YOU.
DAD ...

REEP
REEP
REEP
ZZZ
ZZZ

I'M HO—
ぎょっ
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WEL-COME HOME.

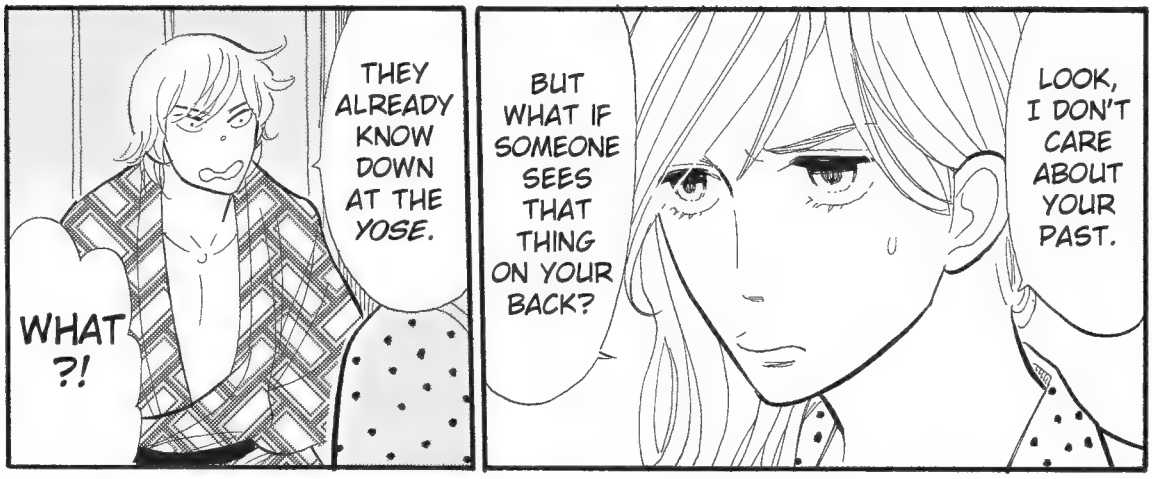

KEPT BEGGING ME TO TEACH HIM A STORY.
SO I CLEANED HIS EARS TO SEND HIM TO SLEEP.
YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S TOO MUCH FOR AN APPREN-TICE?
He's not a pet.
I USED TO DO IT FOR YOUR POP ALL THE TIME.
BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH BOTHER-SOME MEN.

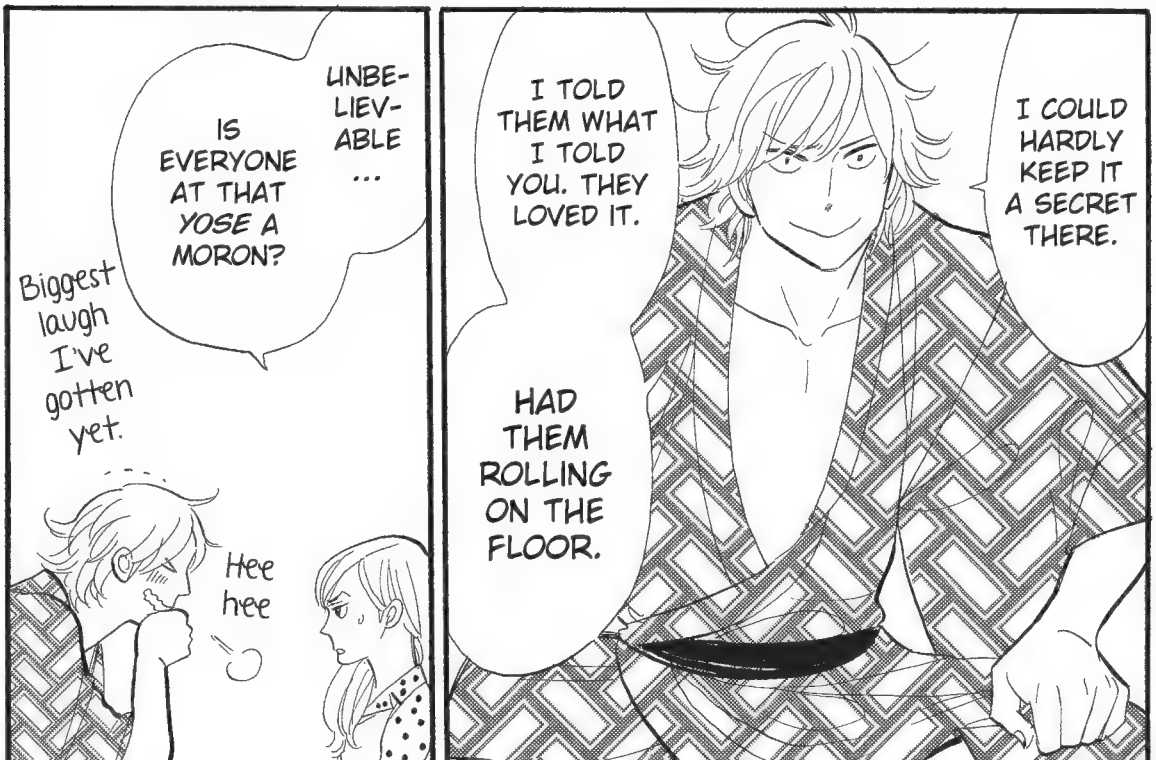

NO, THANK YOU.
YOU WANT A TURN TOO?
GRRRR むぅ
CAN YOU AT LEAST NOT DO IT IN FRONT OF ME?
うぅ……
Full grown men.
Gross.
THWUMP ごろw
I'LL LEAVE HIM IN YOUR HANDS.
I'M OFF TO BED.
GET UP, ALREADY!
どかっ KICK
SHI-SHO YAKU-MO…
HEY!
ZOOM スタスタ
NIGHT.
STAND UP AND WALK!
ぐー… ZZZ
ピコン TEXT
WHAT THE-?!

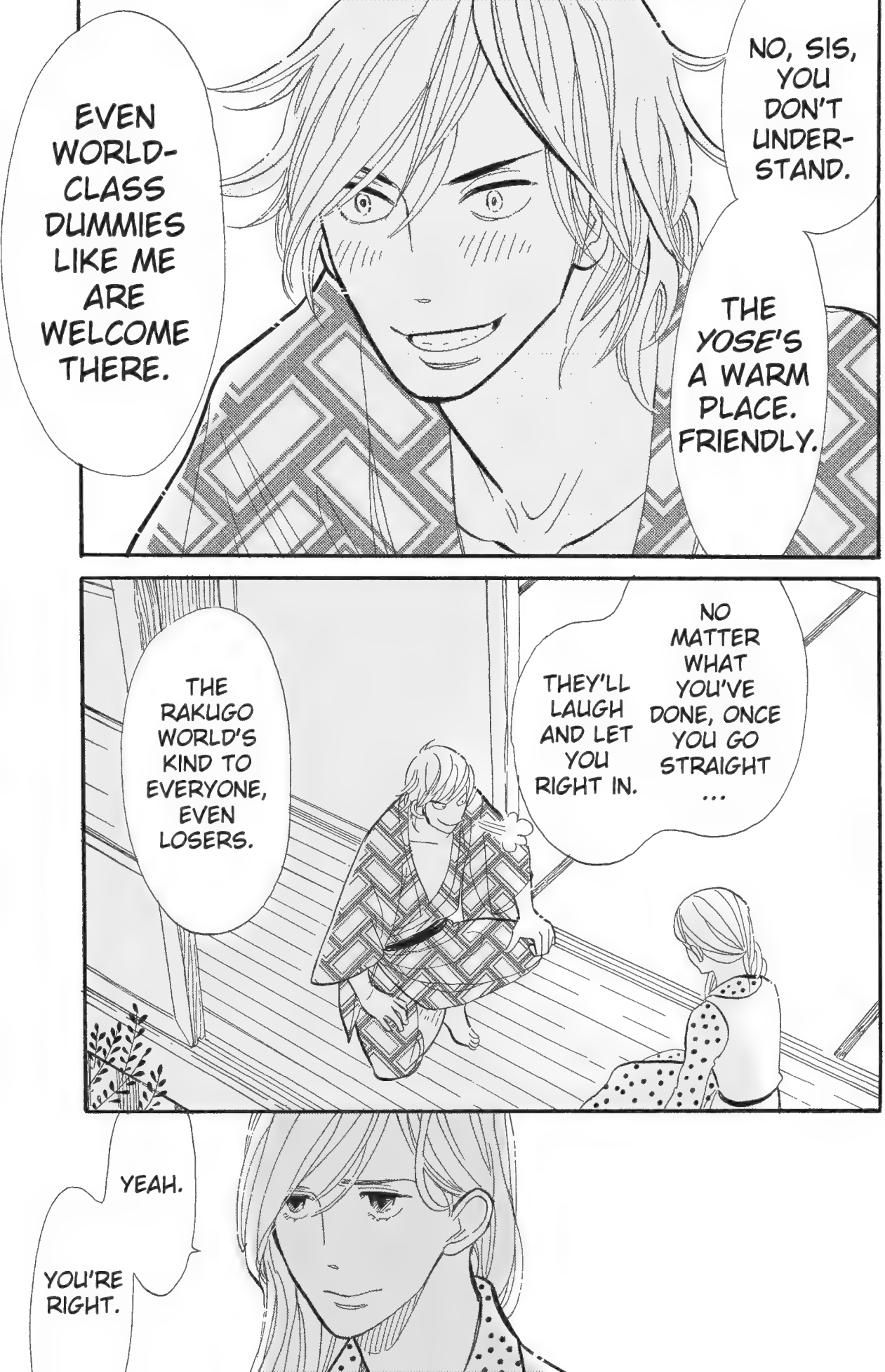

YO-TA-RO! WAKE UP!
Wha...
YESSIR,
SO YOU LIED TO ME?
?
YOU TOLD ME YOU WEREN'T IN A GANG!
THAT TATTOO ON YOUR BACK SAYS DIF-FERENT!

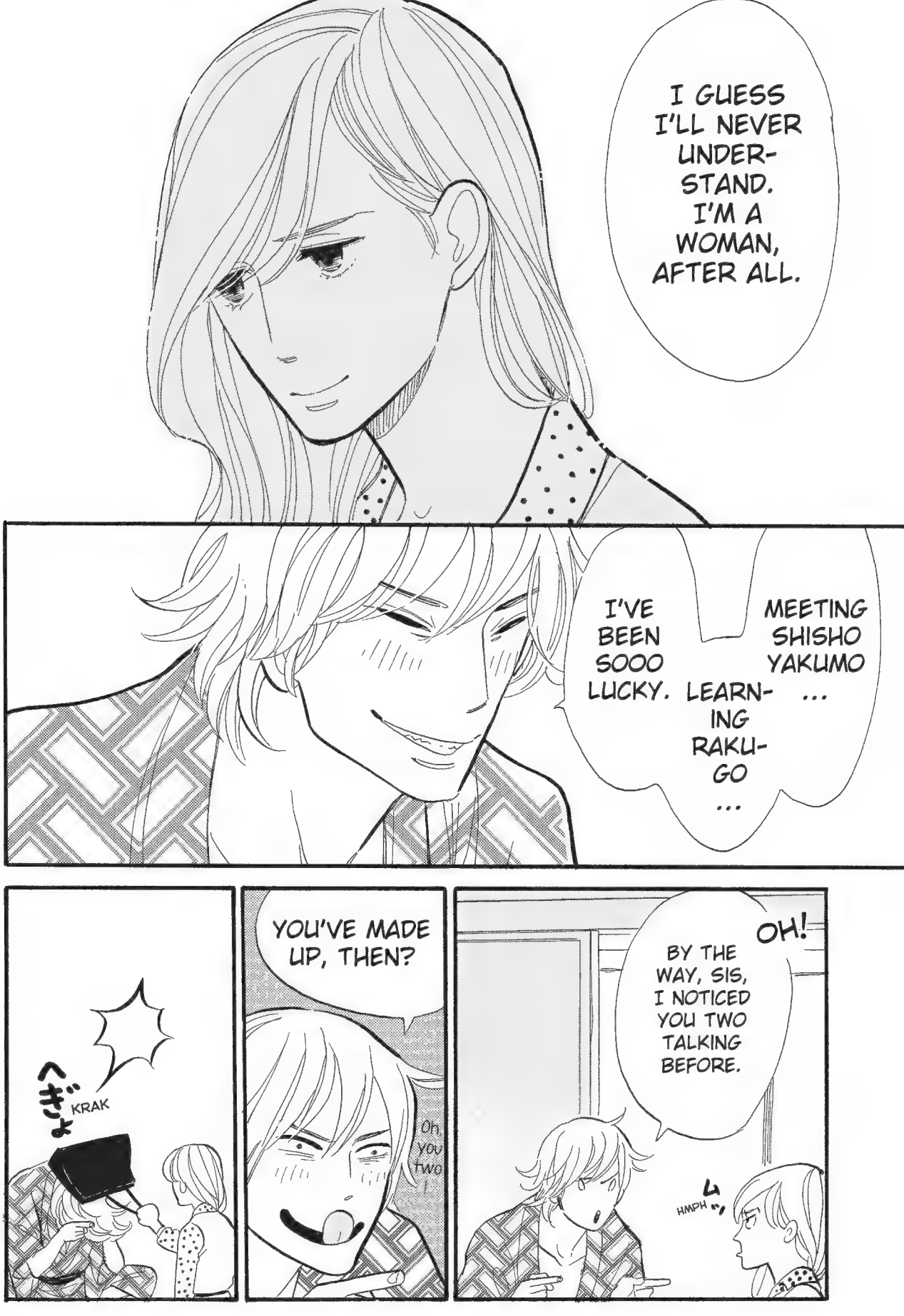
OH, THIS?
HAD TO STOP AT THE OUTLINE. IT HURT TOO MUCH.
YOU KNOW ME. I NEVER SEE THINGS THROUGH.
Same goes for my gang-ster days.
I was in a gang.
HEE HEE
にひ
SO I WAS RIGHT!
BABAP

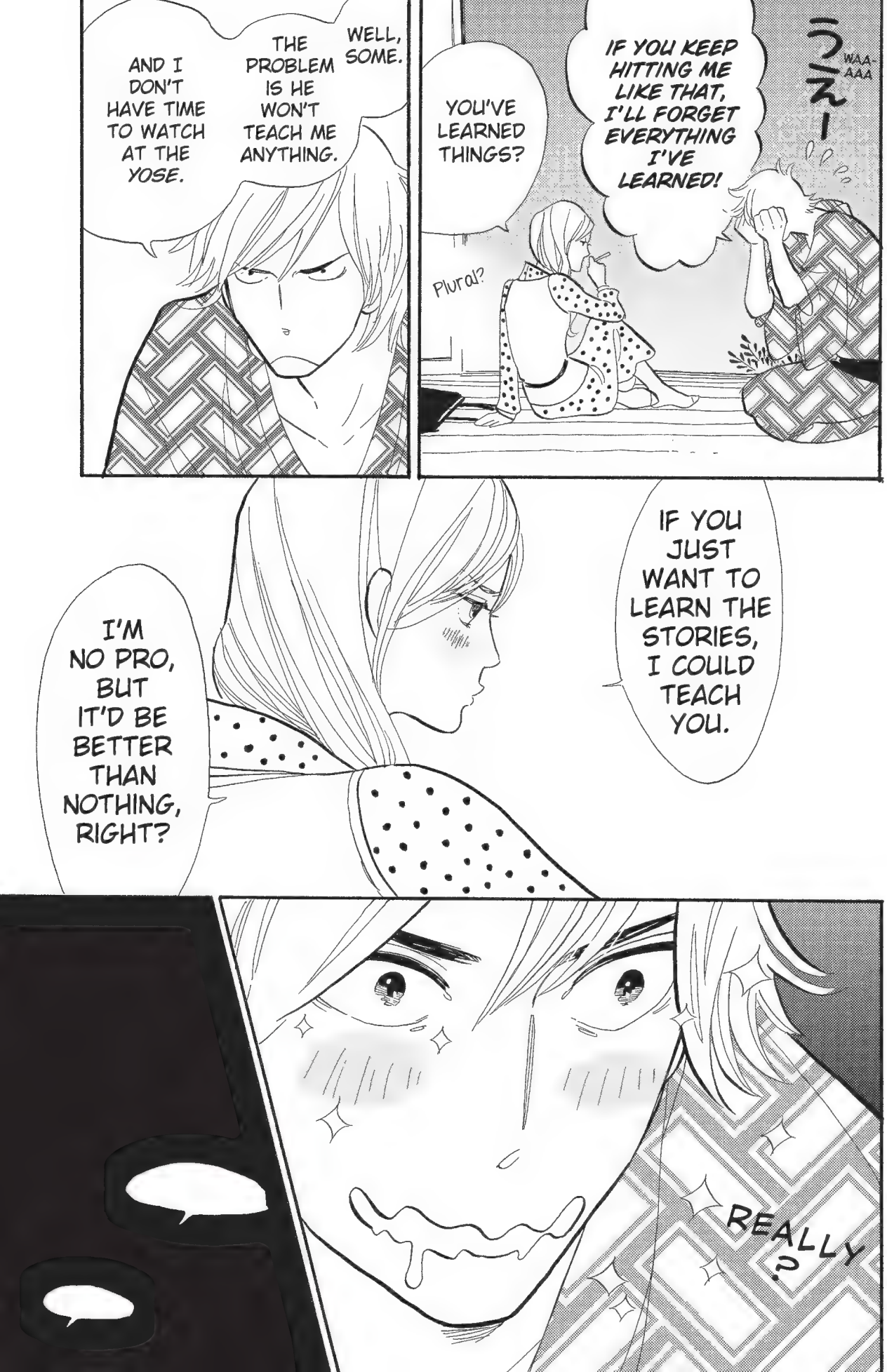
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN KIND OF A DRIFTER, YOU KNOW?
I WAS JUST A DUMB KID. I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT WHAT I WAS GETTING INTO.
WE MADE A DEAL. I DID THE TIME INSIDE, AND THEY LET ME QUIT.

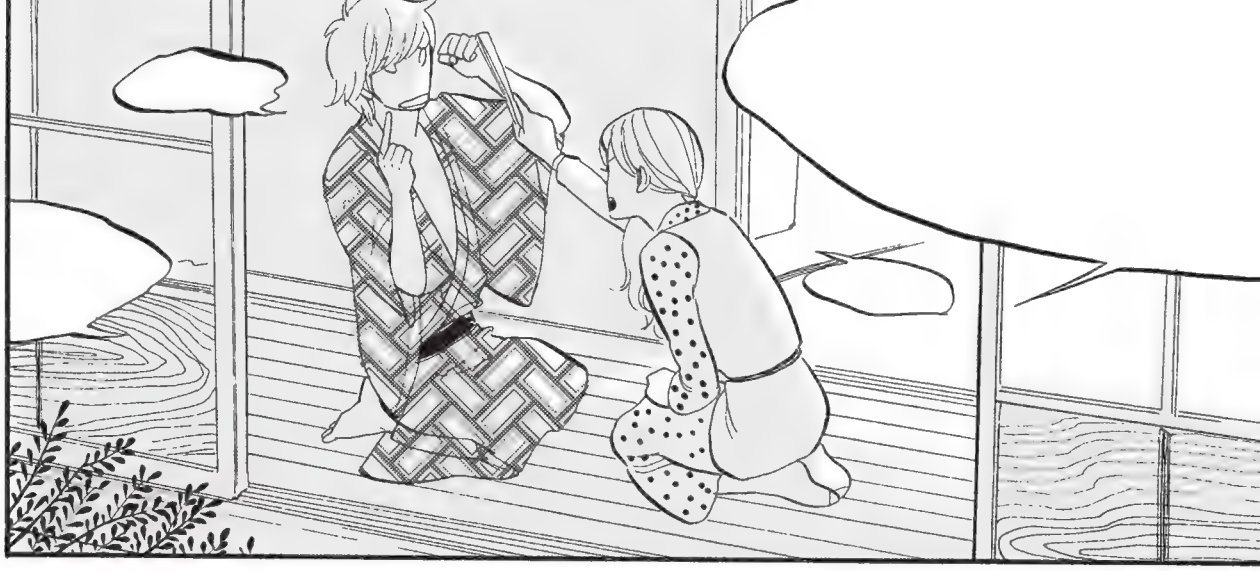

WHAT?!
THEY ALREADY KNOW DOWN AT THE YOSE.
BUT WHAT IF SOMEONE SEES THAT THING ON YOUR BACK?
LOOK, I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR PAST.

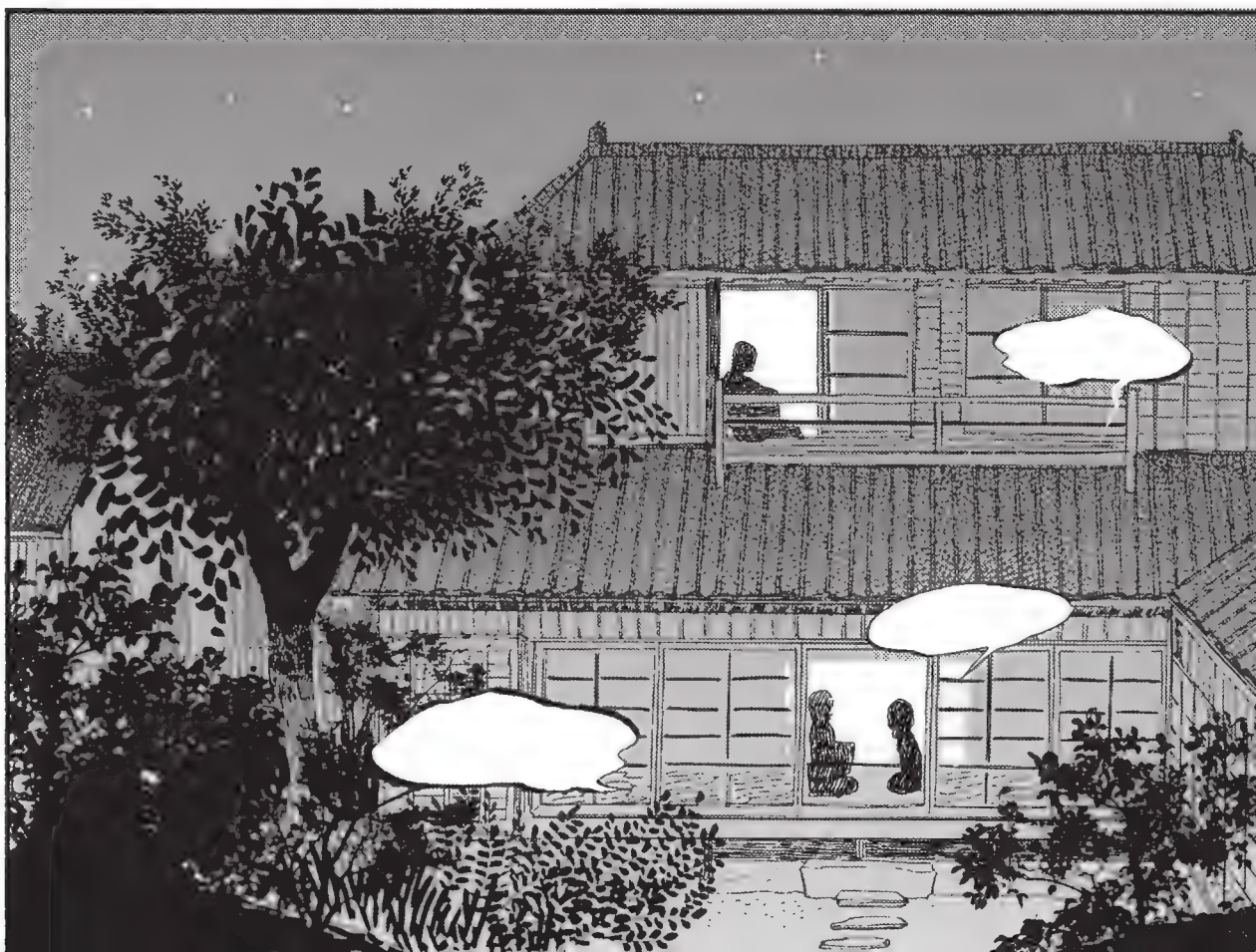

UNBELIEVABLE...
IS EVERYONE AT THAT YOSE A MORON?
Biggest laugh I've gotten yet.
Hee hee
I TOLD THEM WHAT I TOLD YOU. THEY LOVED IT.
HAD THEM ROLLING ON THE FLOOR.
I COULD HARDLY KEEP IT A SECRET THERE.


NO, SIS, YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND.
THE YOSE'S A WARM PLACE. FRIENDLY.
EVEN WORLD-CLASS DUMMIES LIKE ME ARE WELCOME THERE.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE, ONCE YOU GO STRAIGHT ...
THEY'LL LAUGH AND LET YOU RIGHT IN.
THE RAKUGO WORLD'S KIND TO EVERYONE, EVEN LOSERS.
YEAH.
YOU'RE RIGHT.


I GUESS I'LL NEVER UNDER-STAND. I'M A WOMAN, AFTER ALL.
I'VE BEEN SOOO LUCKY.
LEARN-ING RAKU-GO ...
MEETING SHISHO YAKUMO ...
KRAK
YOU'VE MADE UP, THEN?
Oh, you two!
OH!
BY THE WAY, SIS, I NOTICED YOU TWO TALKING BEFORE.
HMPH

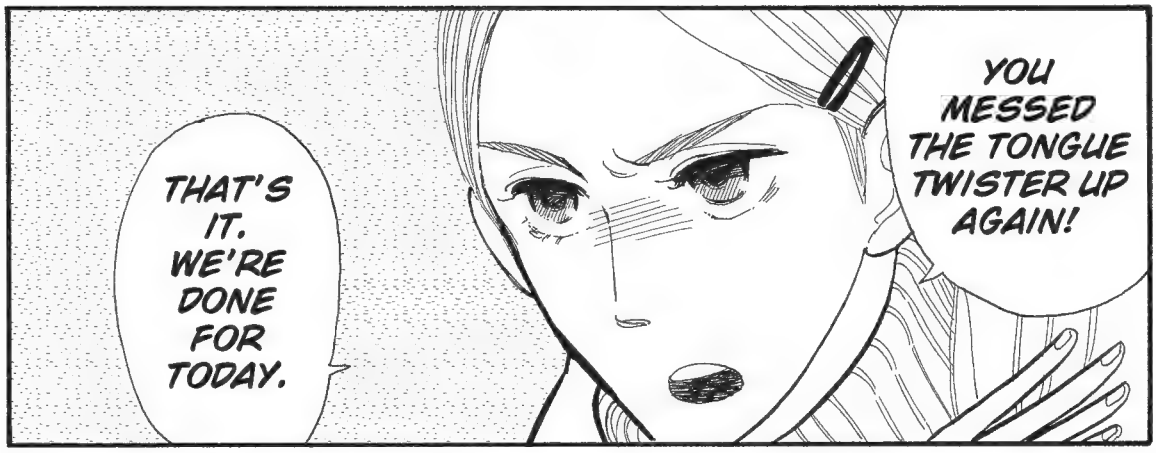

WELL, SOME.
THE PROBLEM IS HE WON'T TEACH ME ANYTHING.
AND I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WATCH AT THE YOSE.
YOU'VE LEARNED THINGS?
Plural?
IF YOU KEEP HITTING ME LIKE THAT, I'LL FORGET EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED!
WAA-AAA
IF YOU JUST WANT TO LEARN THE STORIES, I COULD TEACH YOU.
I'M NO PRO, BUT IT'D BE BETTER THAN NOTHING, RIGHT?
REALLY?

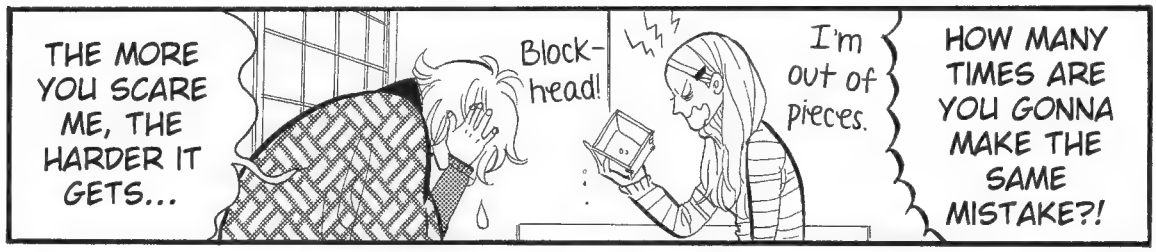


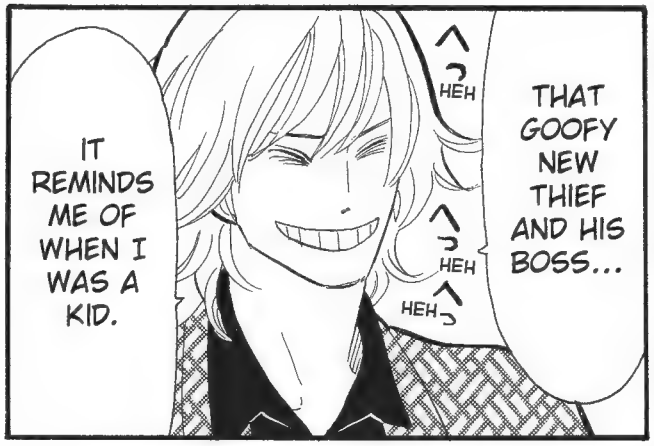


DESCENDING STORIES
SHOWA GENROKU RAKUGO SHINJU
YOTARO'S ODYSSEY: 4

So the chest of drawers ...
what wood would you say the wood... uh... wood would—
PING
ヘロ
KEY

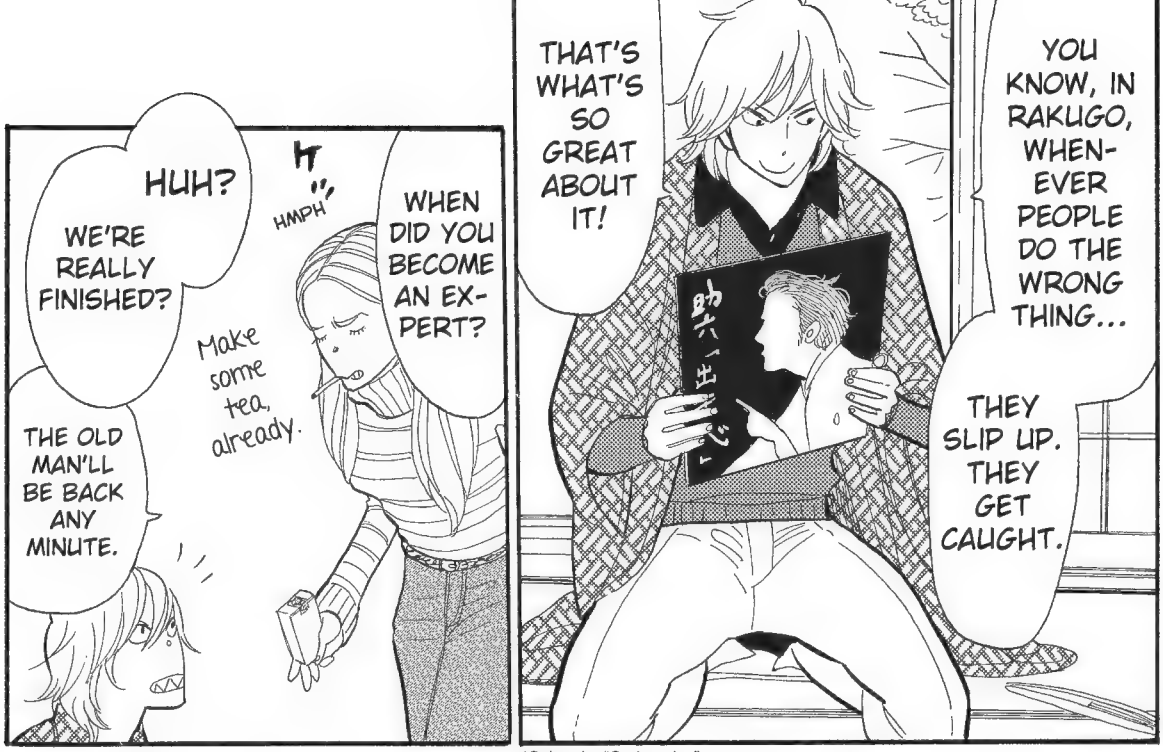

YOU MESSED THE TONGUE TWISTER UP AGAIN!
THAT'S IT. WE'RE DONE FOR TODAY.


HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GONNA MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE?!
I'm out of pieces.
Block-head!
THE MORE YOU SCARE ME, THE HARDER IT GETS...

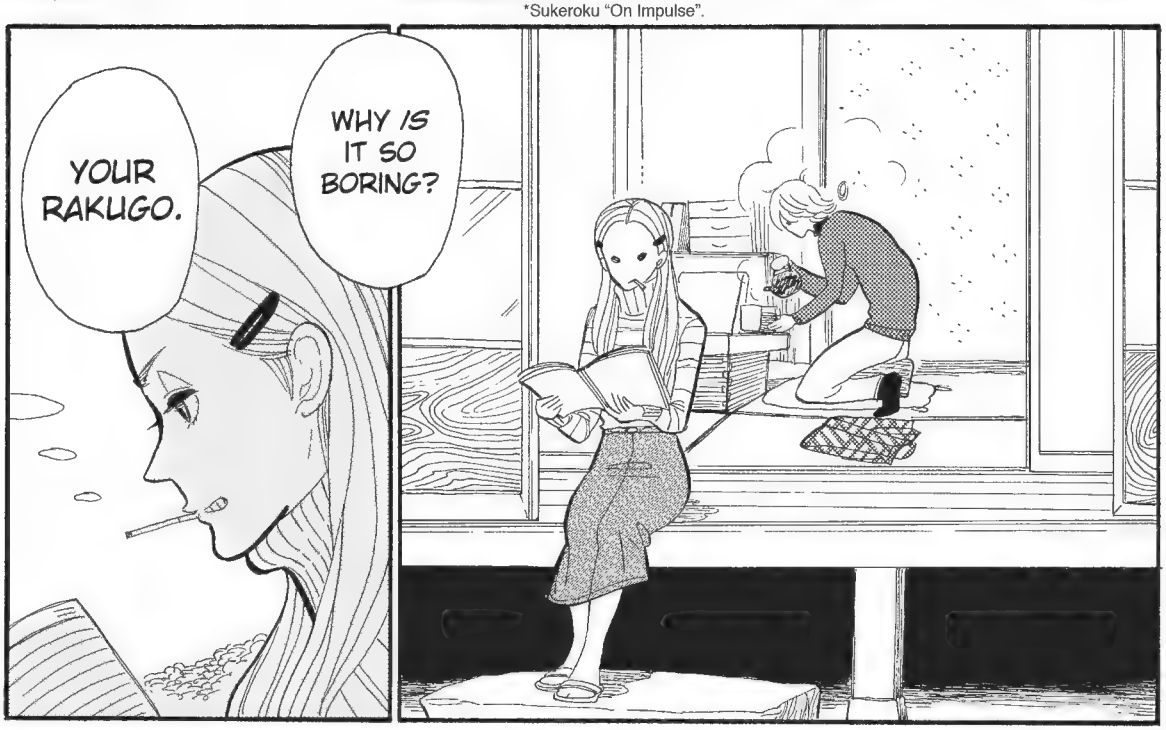

THAT GOOFY NEW THIEF AND HIS BOSS...
HEH
HEH
HEH
IT REMINDS ME OF WHEN I WAS A KID.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE "ON IM-PULSE" ?
IT'S TOO LONG FOR YOU.
THERE'S TOO MUCH TO MEMO-RIZE.

AGAIN WITH THE GANG STUFF.
Here we go again.
Ugh.


YOU KNOW, IN RAKUGO, WHEN-EVER PEOPLE DO THE WRONG THING...
THEY SLIP UP. THEY GET CAUGHT.
THAT'S WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT IT!
WHEN DID YOU BECOME AN EX-PERT?
HMPH
Make some tea, already.
HUH?
WE'RE REALLY FINISHED?
THE OLD MAN'LL BE BACK ANY MINUTE.

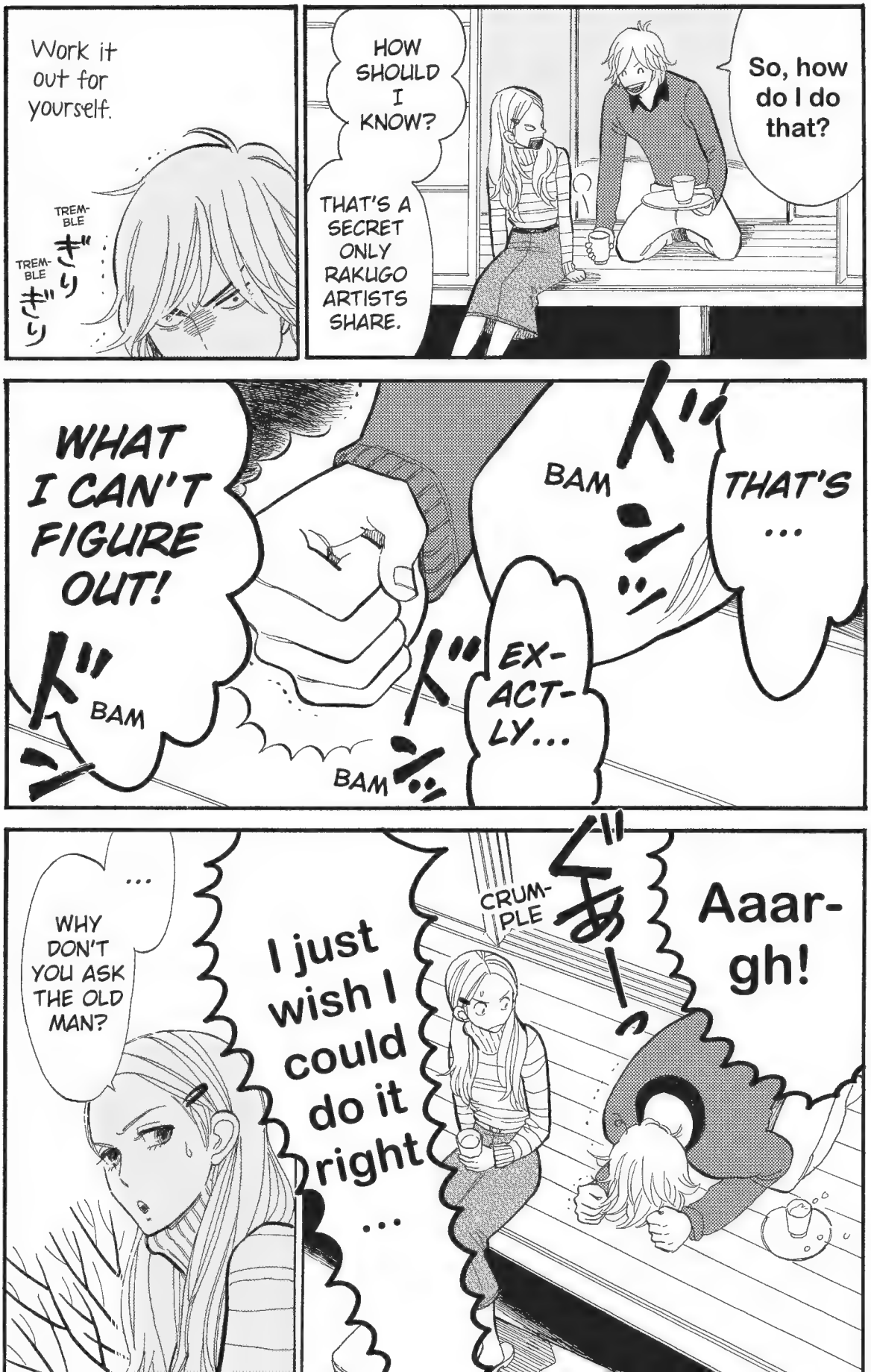
*Sukeroku "On Impulse".



THERE'S NO HOOK.
YOU'RE JUST SAYING THE WORDS. NOT TELLING THE STORY.
YOU MIGHT GET TO THE END, BUT...
YOU LEAVE THE AUDIENCE BEHIND.

AND NO MATTER WHAT I SAY, YOU DON'T GET ANY BETTER.
WELL ...
IT'S EASY TO CRITICIZE FROM THE SIDELINES.

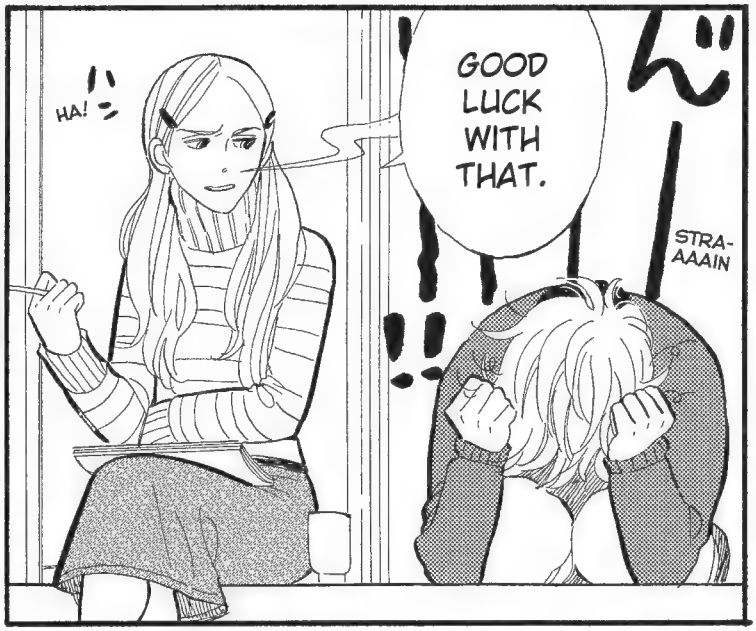
MY FATHER WAS AMAZING ON STAGE.
I WAS ONLY LITTLE, BUT...
HEH ウフフ...
HIS TIMING... IT WAS LIKE HE CAUGHT THE AUDIENCE IN AN INVISIBLE NET.
IT WAS THE COOLEST THING YOU EVER SAW.
HE MADE THEM HIS ALLIES. HIS CAPTIVES!

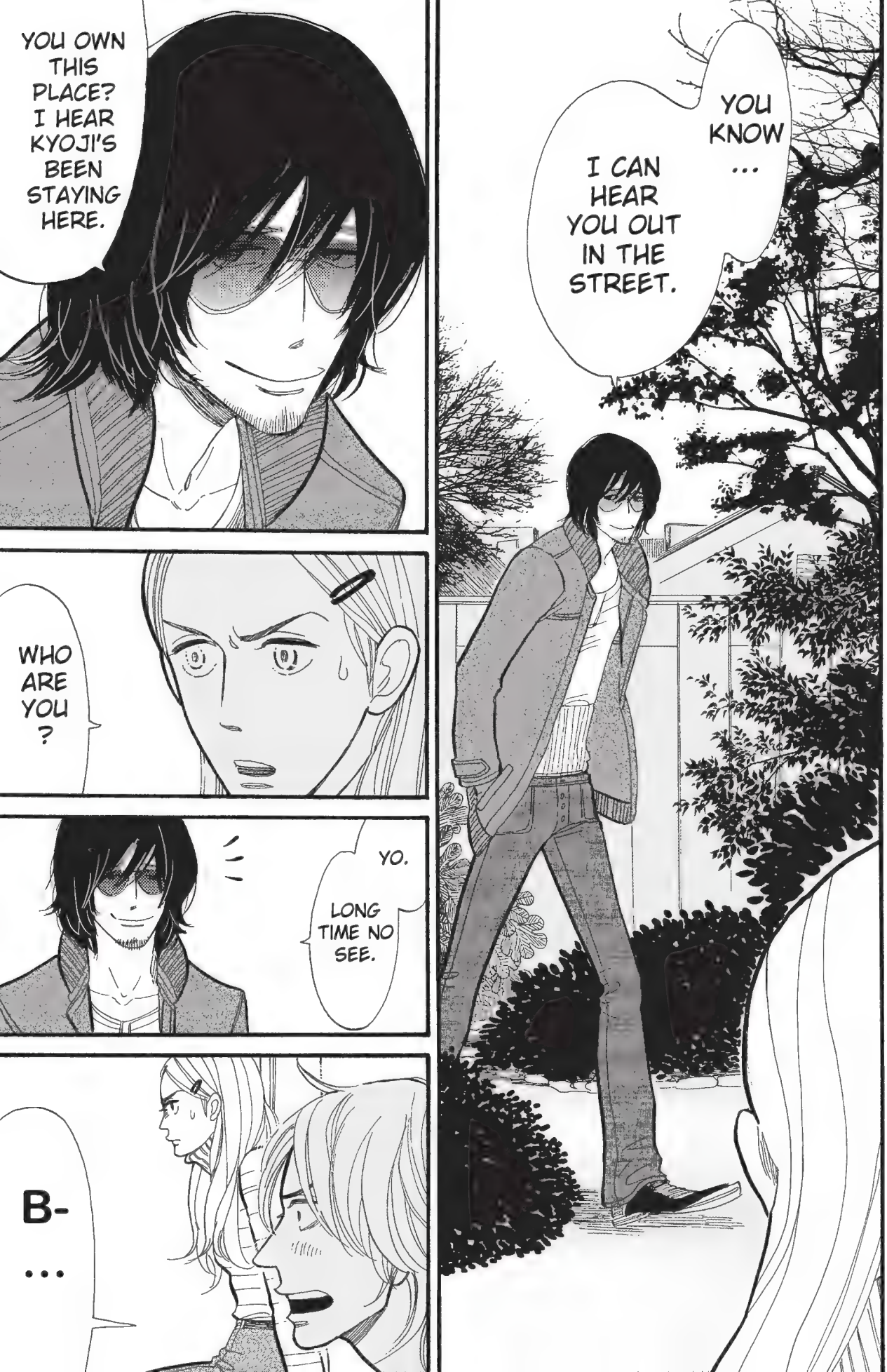

Work it out for yourself.
TREMBLE ぎり
TREMBLE ぎり
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?
THAT'S A SECRET ONLY RAKUGO ARTISTS SHARE.
So, how do I do that?
WHAT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT!
BAM
BAM
EXACTLY...
BAM
THAT'S ...
...
WHY DON'T YOU ASK THE OLD MAN?
I just wish I could do it right ...
CRUMPLE
あ!
Aaargh!

You ask him, Sis!
Why would he tell me?!
Steal it if you can.
~ hh SNEEER
I'D RATH-ER DIE!

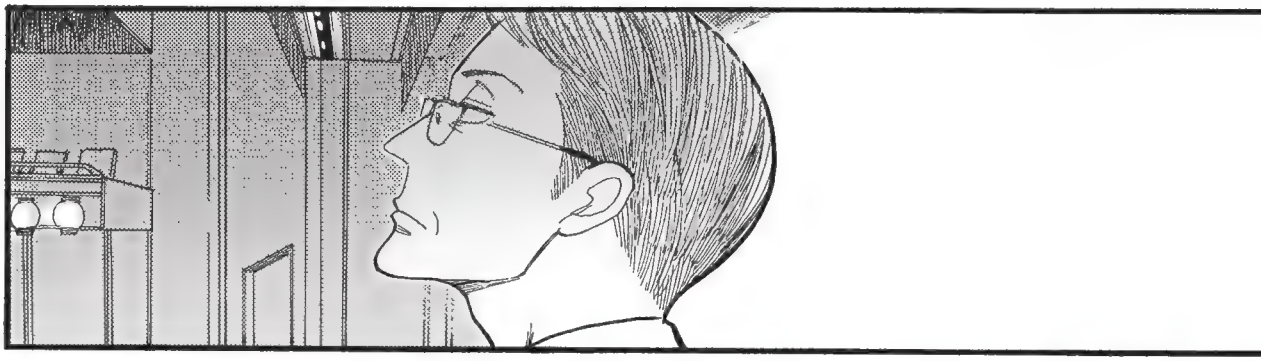
DAMN IT!
WHAT AM I MISS-ING?
WHAT IS IT?
ギギギギ…
GRIND GRIND

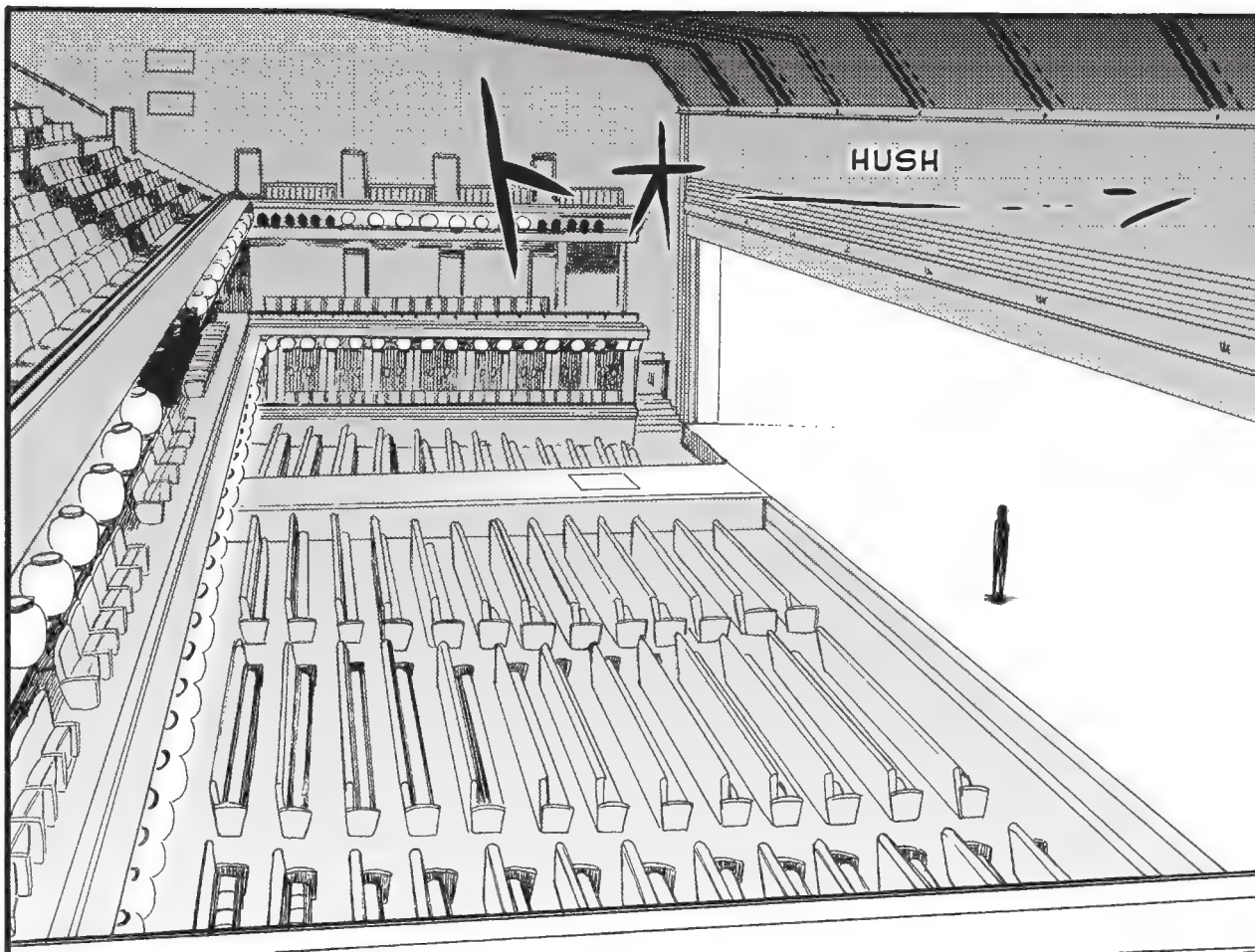
HM?
ん?


GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.
HA!
ハ
STRA-AAAIN

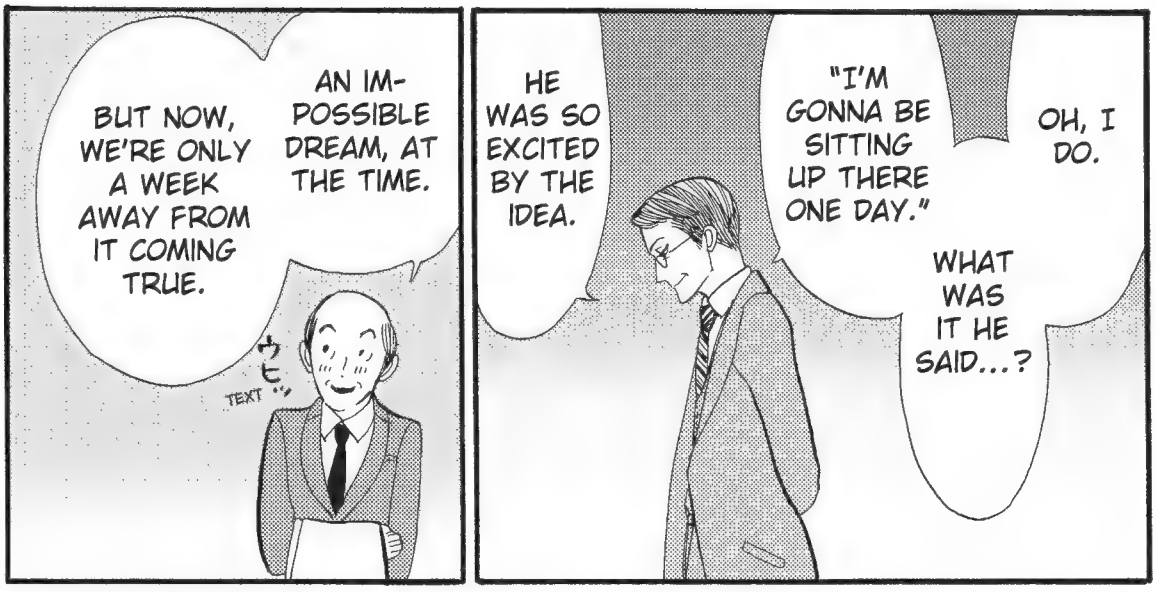

YOU KNOW ...
I CAN HEAR YOU OUT IN THE STREET.
YOU OWN THIS PLACE? I HEAR KYOJI'S BEEN STAYING HERE.
WHO ARE YOU?
YO.
LONG TIME NO SEE.
B- ...

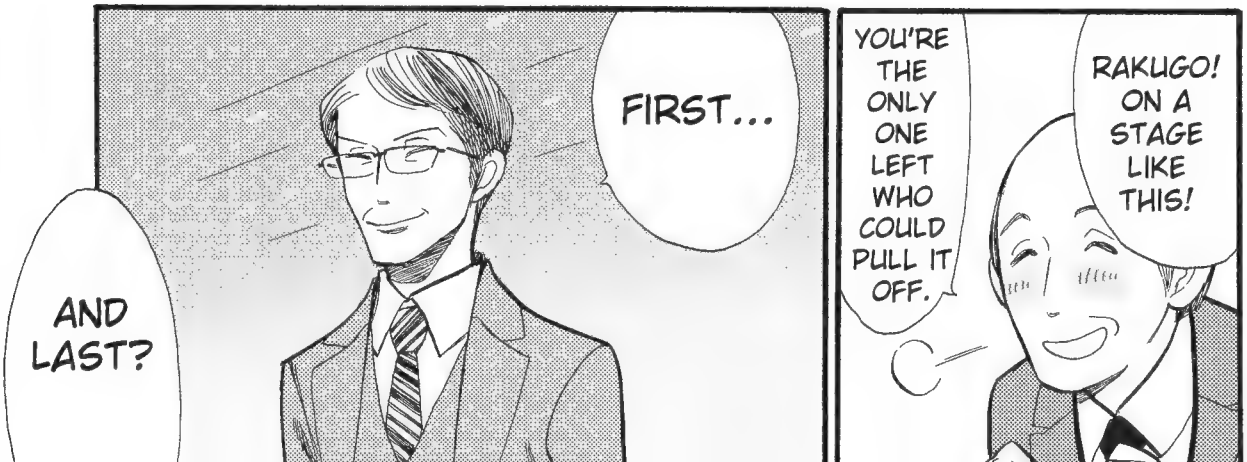
B-
...
Bro
!



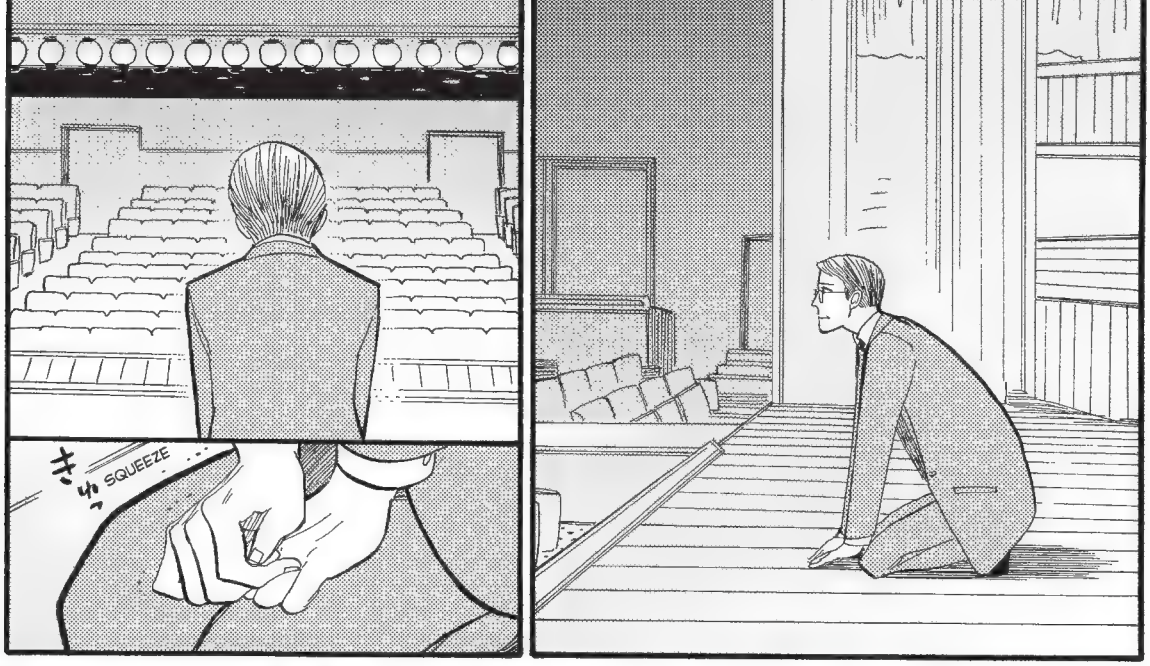

HUSH

SHISHO YA-KUMO.
TAKES YOU BACK, DOESN'T IT?
DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME WE ALL CAME TO SEE THE KABUKI HERE?
YOU, ME, SUKE-ROKU...


OH, I DO.
"I'M GONNA BE SITTING UP THERE ONE DAY."
WHAT WAS IT HE SAID...?
HE WAS SO EXCITED BY THE IDEA.
AN IM-POSSIBLE DREAM, AT THE TIME.
BUT NOW, WE'RE ONLY A WEEK AWAY FROM IT COMING TRUE.
ウヒッ
TEXT


RAKUGO! ON A STAGE LIKE THIS!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHO COULD PULL IT OFF.
FIRST...
AND LAST?

SUKE-ROKU'S IS THE RAKUGO THAT BELONGS HERE.
IT'S NOT THAT I'M UN-GRATE-FUL.
BUT MY RAKUGO ISN'T REALLY MEANT FOR VENUES LIKE THIS.
SHI-SHO YAKU-MO...
RAKUGO THAT MOVES WITH THE TIMES...
RAKUGO FOR EVERY-ONE...
QUITE BEYOND MY POWERS.


SQUEEZE

SUKE-ROKU ...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

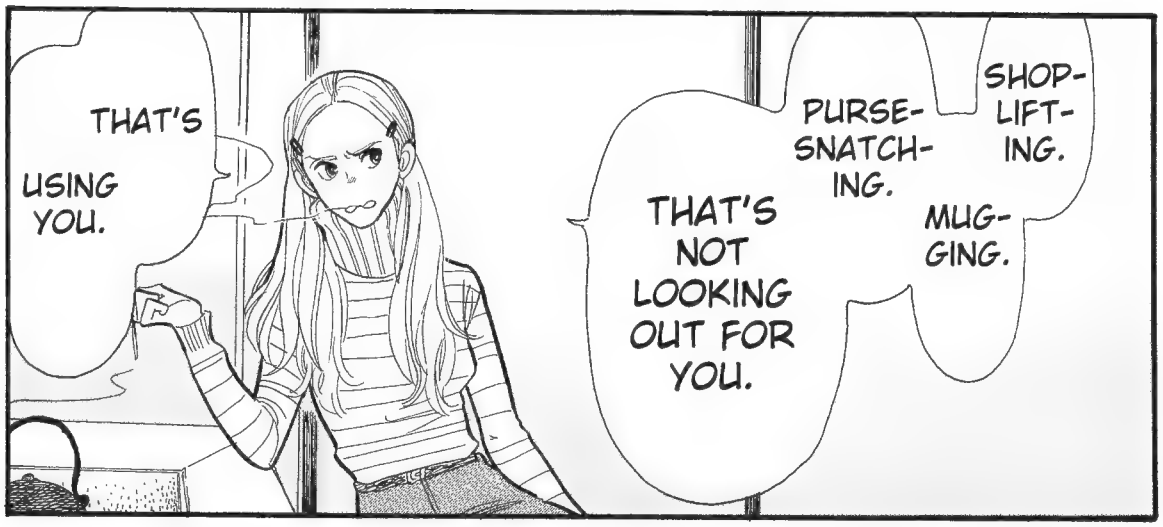
DON'T JUST SIT THERE GRINNING. TELL ME.

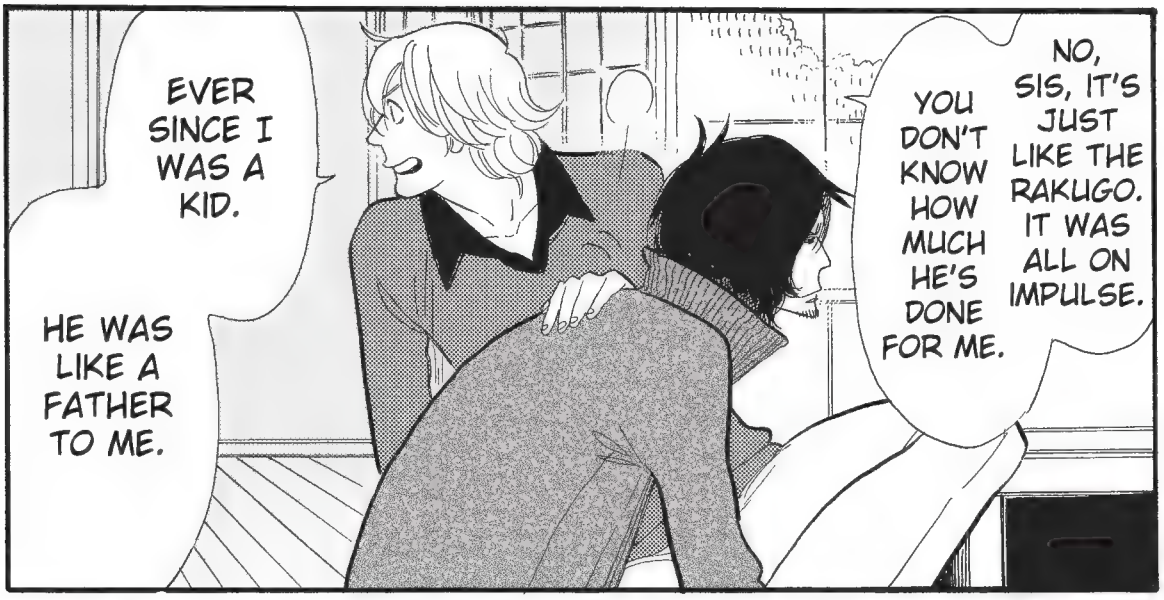
SIR ?
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
ME ?
NO.
I'LL BE PRAC-TICING HARD TONIGHT.
GETTING IT INTO THE MARROW OF MY BONES.
I THINK WE'RE DONE HERE.
LET'S SAY OUR GOOD-BYES AND BE GETTING BACK.

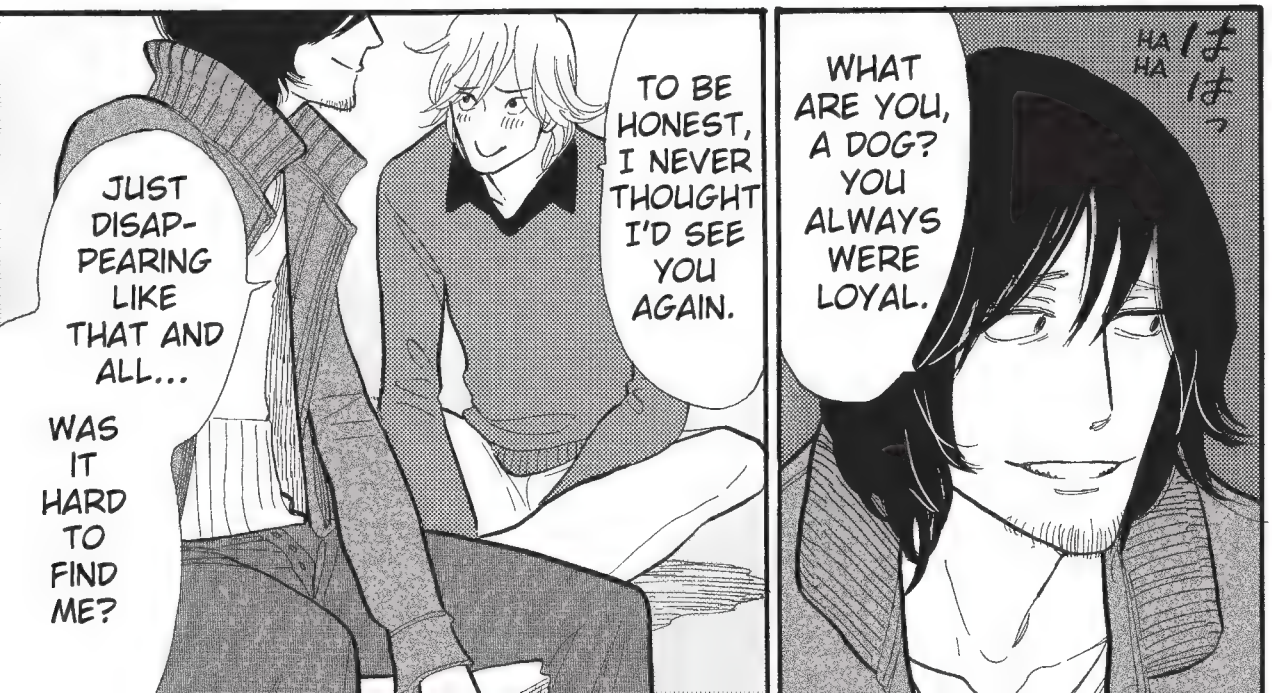
MAN, KYOJI.
ONCE YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH ...
YOU NEVER SHUT UP.

That's 'cause I'm so happy to see you!
it's been too long!

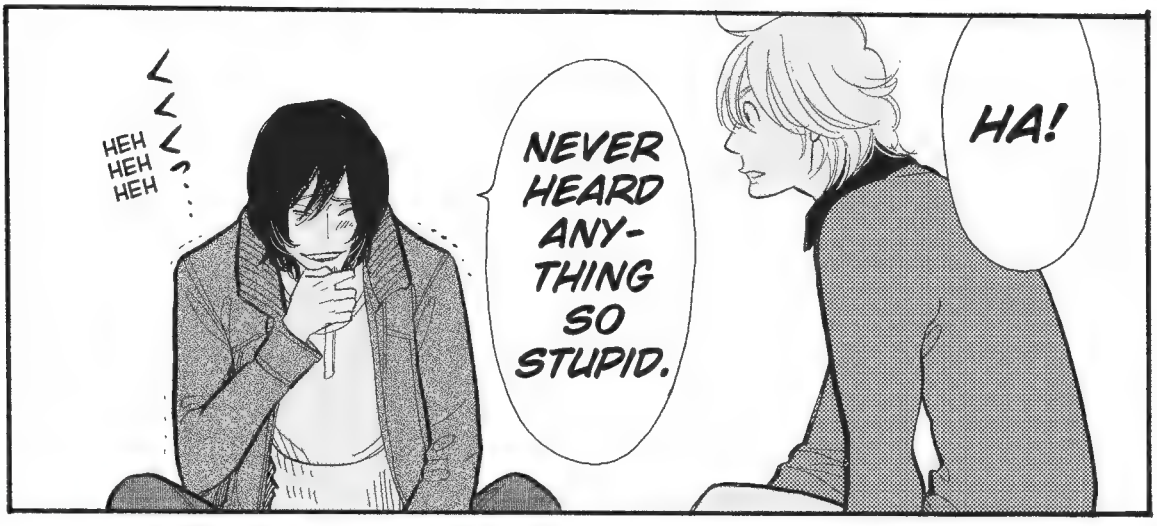
I NEVER EX-PECTED I'D BE ABLE TO INTRO-DUCE YOU TO SIS.
THREE YEARS.


THAT'S USING YOU.
THAT'S NOT LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.
SHOP-LIFT-ING.
PURSE-SNATCH-ING.
MUG-GING.


EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
HE WAS LIKE A FATHER TO ME.
NO, SIS, IT'S JUST LIKE THE RAKUGO. IT WAS ALL ON IMPULSE.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE'S DONE FOR ME.

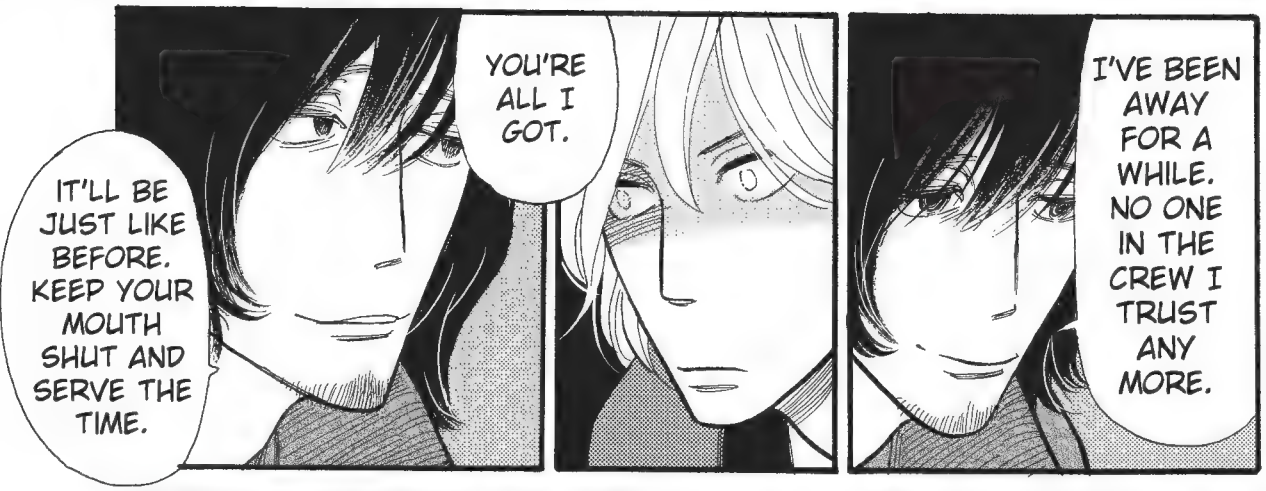

JUST DISAP-PEARING LIKE THAT AND ALL...
WAS IT HARD TO FIND ME?
TO BE HONEST, I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU AGAIN.
WHAT ARE YOU, A DOG? YOU ALWAYS WERE LOYAL.
HA HA
はは

IT'S A SMALL TOWN.
I HEAR YOU'RE DOING RAKUGO NOW.
YEP ウン
SO, KYO-JI...
NOT HARD AT ALL.


HA!
NEVER HEARD ANY-THING SO STUPID.
HEH HEH HEH ククク...

カキーン
KA-SNAPP
DON'T TELL ME THAT LUKE-WARM CRAP MAKES YOU FEEL ALIVE.
しゅん SOB

I GOT A GOOD THING SET UP.
CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT HERE.
BUT I NEED YOU.
LET'S DO IT AGAIN. LET'S REALLY LIVE. PUT IT ALL ON THE LINE.
YOU AND ME.


YOU'RE ALL I GOT.
IT'LL BE JUST LIKE BEFORE. KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT AND SERVE THE TIME.
I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A WHILE. NO ONE IN THE CREW I TRUST ANY MORE.

GIMME A BREAK.
I QUIT THE GANG, BRO.
WHEN YOU GET OUT, YOU'LL BE SET. NOT A BAD DEAL, RIGHT?
DID YOU REALLY THINK IT'D BE THAT EASY?

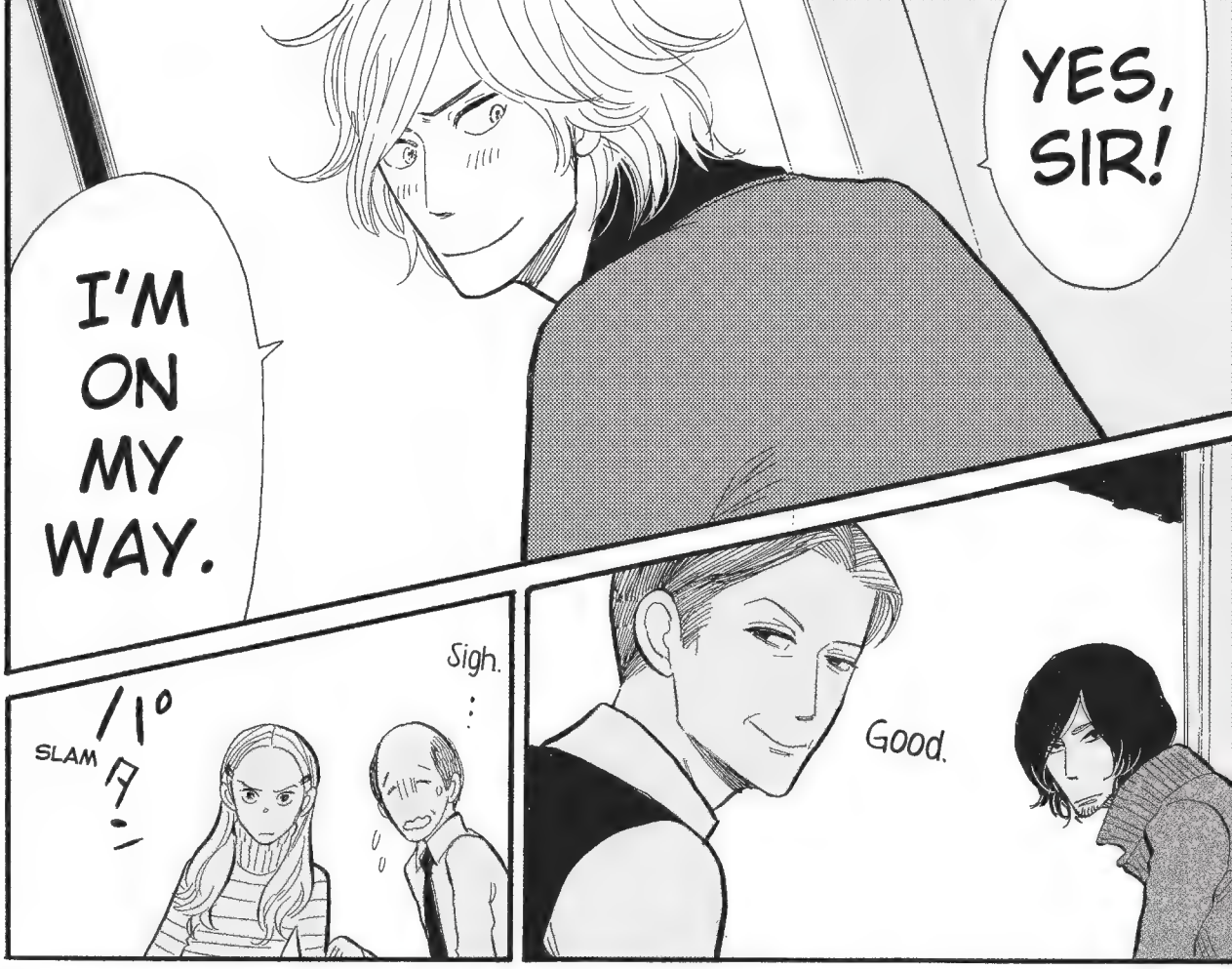
KYOJI.
YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

SAYING NO ISN'T AN OPTION.
KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
YO-TARO!
TELL HIM TO GET THE—
SHUT UP, BITCH!
WHA—
...
SHOCK

COME ON.
DON'T JUST SIT THERE. SAY SOMETHING.
KYOJI?
HEH
BRO...
RAKUGO'S WHAT I WANT TO DO NOW.
LIKE I SAID, IT'S STUPID.
YEAH, AND I DUNNO WHY.
I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING THIS.
BUT ENOUGH OF THIS CHILD'S PLAY.
PARDON MY INTRUDING.

I BELIEVE OUR YOTARO USED TO WORK FOR YOU?
WELCOME, WELCOME.
SHISHO YAKUMO!
I SHOULD HAVE INTRODUCED MYSELF EARLIER.
I'M ACTING IN LOCO PARENTIS NOW.
DELIGHTFUL TO MEET YOU.
I'M SURE WE'LL GET ALONG.
YES, I TOOK HIM IN AFTER YOU TOSSED HIM ASIDE.
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT, BUT...
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW THE WORLD WORKS. FINDERS KEEPERS.

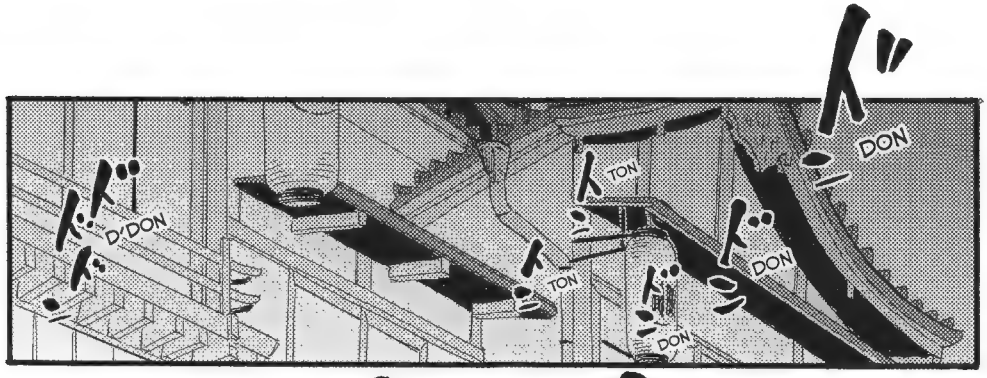
YOTA.
YOU HAVE A SHOW THIS EVENING, RIGHT?
Yes-sir!
GO AND GET READY.
UH...
THWAP
GO!
YES-SIR!
I'LL DROP BY THE YOSE LATER.
WITH OUR GUEST HERE.
SO DON'T HOLD BACK.
SHOW HIM JUST HOW STUPID YOUR RAKUGO IS.


YES, SIR!
I'M ON MY WAY.
Good.
Sigh.
SLAM

FROWN
YOU WILL COME TO THE YOSE, OF COURSE?
AND THAT'S THAT.

OH, BUT YOU HAVE TO. IT'S YOUR DUTY.
I'LL PASS, OLD MAN.
YOU WERE LIKE A FATHER TO HIM.

How exhausting
Sigh
WE'LL TALK MORE THEN.
MATSUDA, I KNOW IT'S EARLY, BUT PLEASE PREPARE DINNER.
SET AN EXTRA PLACE FOR OUR GUEST.


DON
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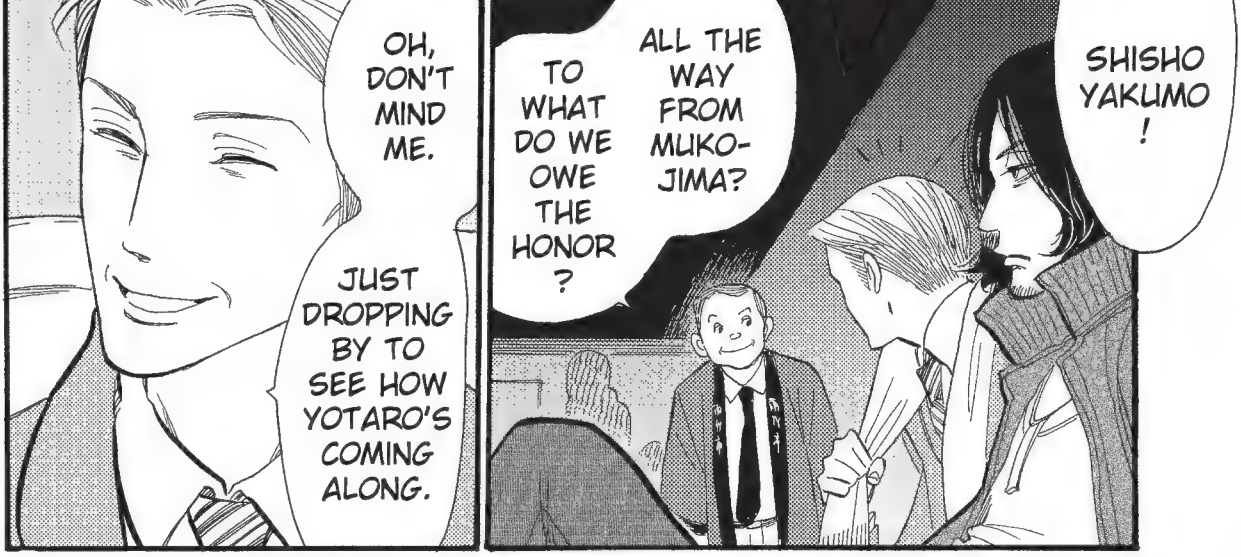
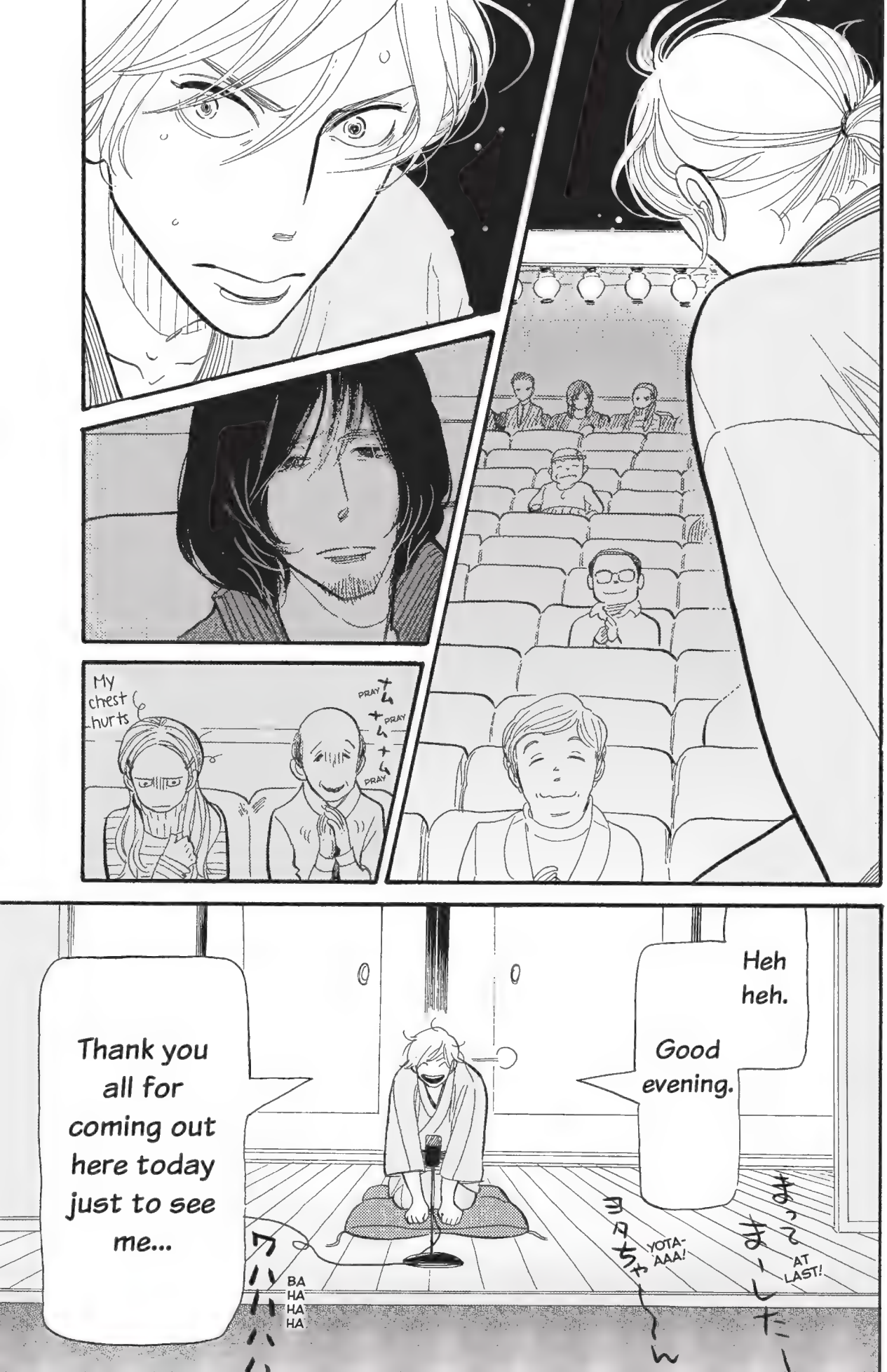

SHISHO YAKUMO!
ALL THE WAY FROM MUKO-JIMA?
TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE HONOR?
OH, DON'T MIND ME.
JUST DROPPING BY TO SEE HOW YOTARO'S COMING ALONG.

HEY, YOU ALMOST SOUND LIKE A REAL SHISHO NOW!
HA HA HA
YOU SHOULD WATCH WITH ME.
YOTA'S GOING TO BE GREAT TO-NIGHT.
Oh yeah?

TE-TONG TONG
TON TON
MUTTER
MUTTER
WHY RAKU-GO?
TEKE-TENG
TENG TONG
TENG!
MUT-TER
MUT-TER
I NEED TO SHOW HIM.
WHAT DO I DO?
I NEED TO MAKE HIM LAUGH.
TREAD


My chest hurts
PRAY
PRAY
PRAY
Heh heh.
Good evening.
Thank you all for coming out here today just to see me...
BA HA HA HA HA
ヨータちゃ～～ん
YOTA-AAA!
まってました～
AT LAST!

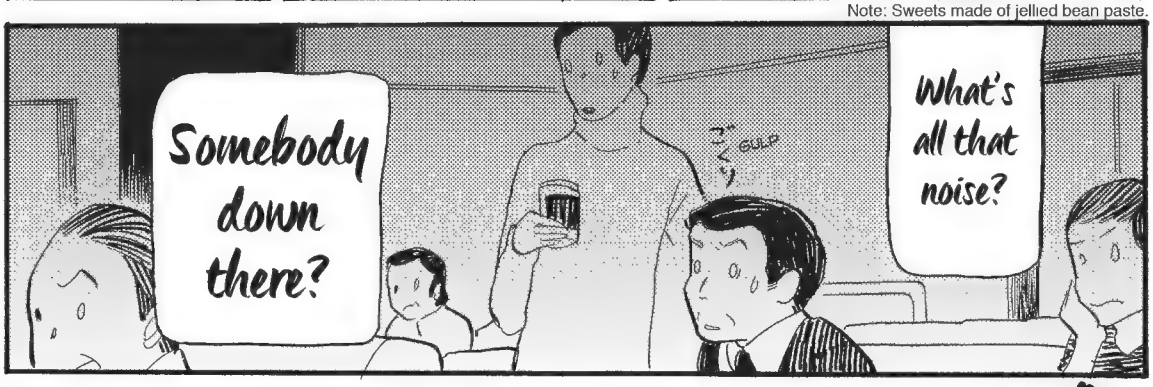
I appreciate this. I really do.
BONK
You don't know what it means to me.
They say that no-one's the villain of their own story...
But the robbers we meet in rakugo hardly count as heroes either...
"ON IMPULSE!"
AFTER MESSING IT UP SO MANY TIMES?!
MORON!
GRIND
GRIND
GLANCE
GLANCE
Dummy!
Why do you keep screwing up like that?
Blockhead!
You'll never become a first-class robber that way!

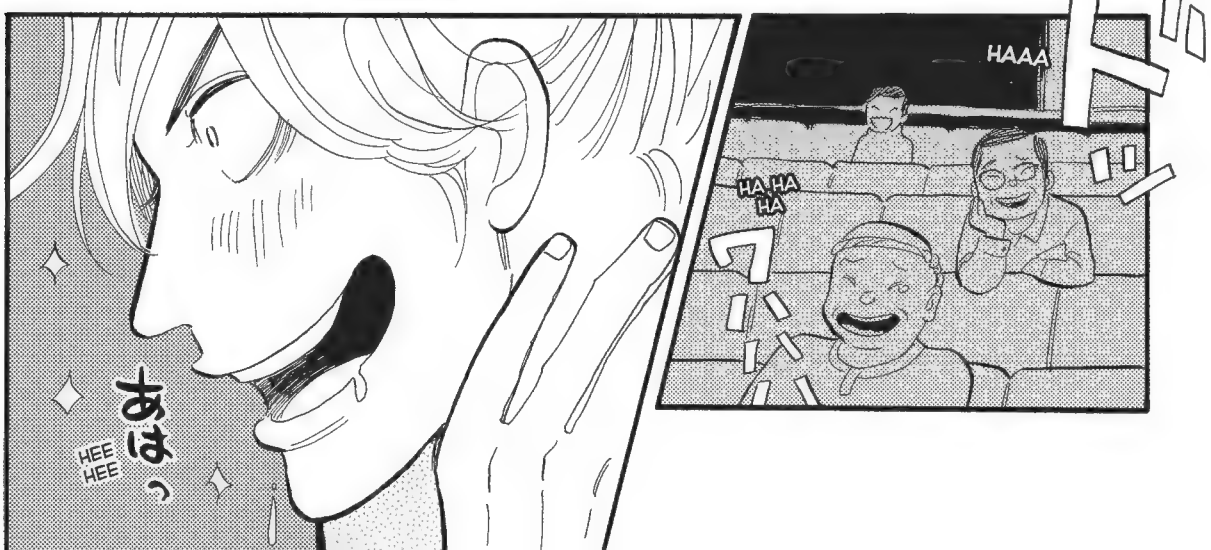
SNRT
I swear I'll change my ways, buckle down...
And make you proud of how bad I am!
I'm sorry, boss...
Don't give up on me just yet.

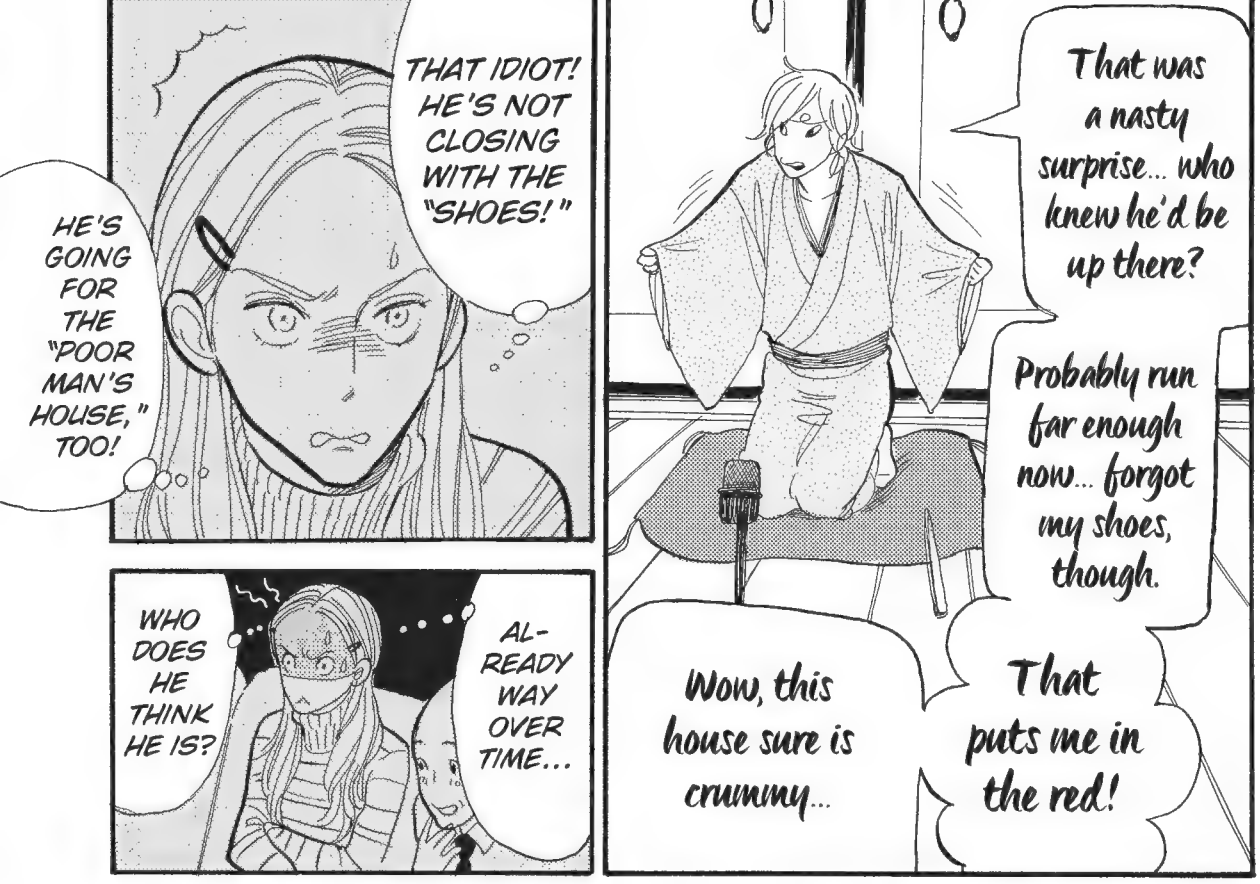
You gotta cry your way out of it, kid.
A screw-up like you's bound to get caught!
TITTER
TITTER
Tell 'em you've got a sick grandma, you're at wit's end, you did it on impulse, you're so sorry.
Helps if you cry, too.
HEE HEE HEE
GIGGLE
What should I do if I am?

HA!
BAW HAW HAW
SMIRK
SNICK-ER
THAT TAKES ME BACK.
HE SAID THE SAME THING TO ME WHEN HE WAS A KID.
HEH HEH
Boss... even if they don't forgive me, you will, right?
...
HAW HAW HAW

Note: Sweets made of jellied bean paste.






That was a nasty surprise... who knew he'd be up there?
Probably run far enough now... forgot my shoes, though.
That puts me in the red!
Wow, this house sure is crummy...
THAT IDIOT! HE'S NOT CLOSING WITH THE "SHOES!"
HE'S GOING FOR THE "POOR MAN'S HOUSE," TOO!
AL-READY WAY OVER TIME...
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?

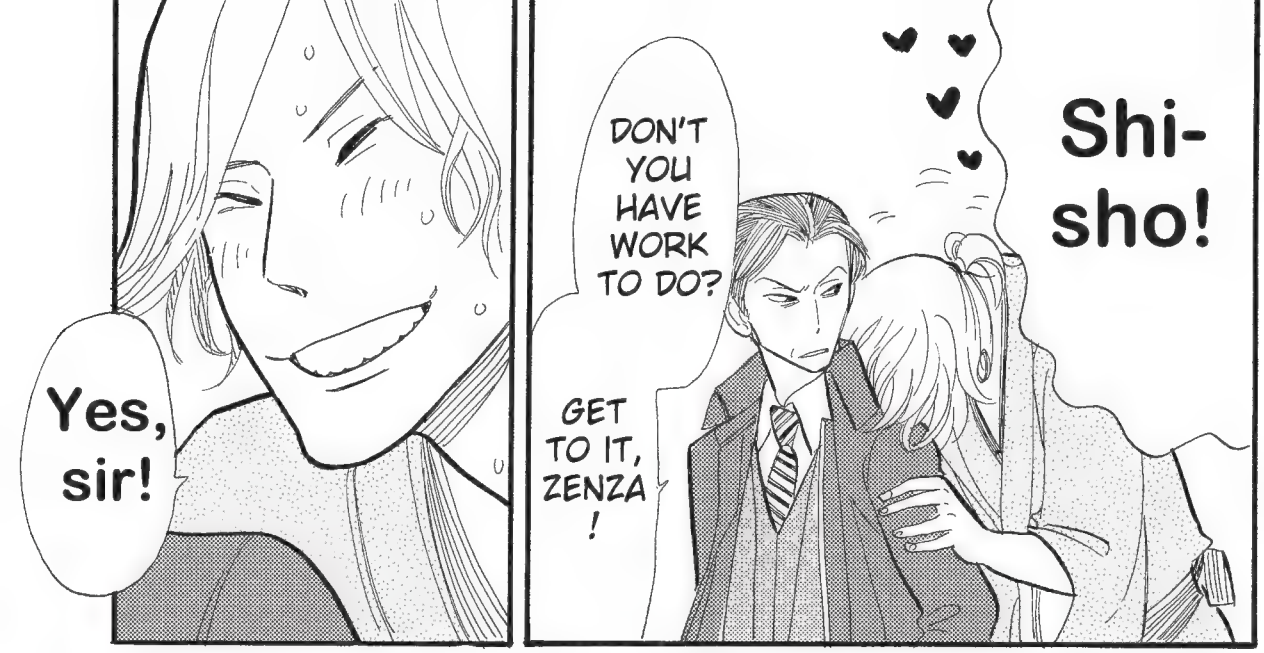
PLEASE, LET HIM FINISH.
I'LL APOLOGIZE TO WHO-EVER'S NEXT ON THE PRO-GRAM.
OH, I'LL APOL-OGIZE WITH YOU!
YOU WERE RIGHT! YOTA'S DOING GREAT!

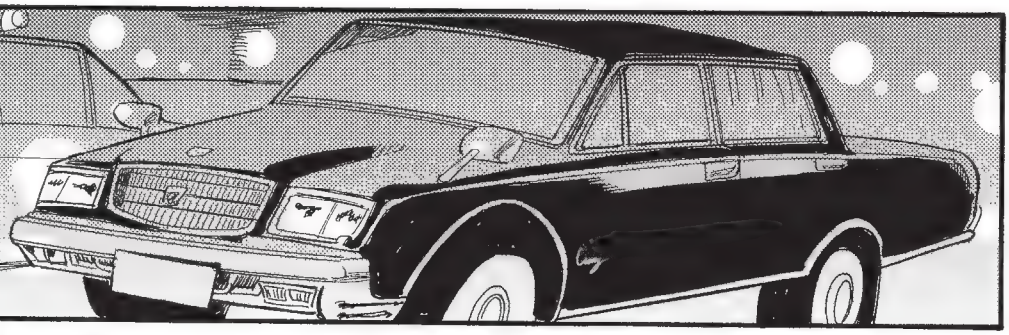
Not a bad business, robbery... low startup costs...
HEE HEE HEE
Mm! Delicious...
HAW HAW
Slluurrrp...
DAW HAW HAW
だはは
Tsk... better than nothing...
ヒーヒヒヒ
HEEEE HEE HEE
Some of this gruel...
SNICK-ER
ククク...
Call this a tatami mat? Why...
アハハハ
HA HA HA
...anything worth stealing...

A CONNEC-TION...
No, I'm fine, thanks...
I'll write down what got stolen, so you tell me what it was.
THIS IS IT...
THIS IS IT!
We have the same kind!
THIS IS... FUN!
What coin-cidence!
Our blankets have a warm, thick lining of navy cotton... just the thing for cold nights.
Uh, well, it has a warm, thick lining of navy cotton ...
And what was the chest of drawers made of?
IT FEELS GREAT!
BWAA HA HA HA

I HAVE TO THANK YOU.
YOU ASKED HIM JUST THE RIGHT QUESTION.
"WHY RAKUGO ?"
HAW HAW HAW HAW
I'm sorry! I did it...
On im-pulse !
ROAR
D'DON!

HUH?
WHERE'D HE GO?
BRO!
SAID HE DIDN'T NEED YOUR HELP AFTER ALL.
HE LEFT.
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?
HE WAS STILL LAUGHING.
YOU KNOW THE BIG MAN?!
I TOLD HIM I'D CLEAR THINGS UP THERE.
ブルルル…
SHIVER
WHAT?!
Again
with the gangs.
BESIDES, I HAPPEN TO KNOW HIS BOSS...


Yes, sir!
DON'T YOU HAVE WORK TO DO?
GET TO IT, ZENZA!
Shi-sho!



DID YOU TEACH HIM SUKE-ROKU?
WAS IT YOU?

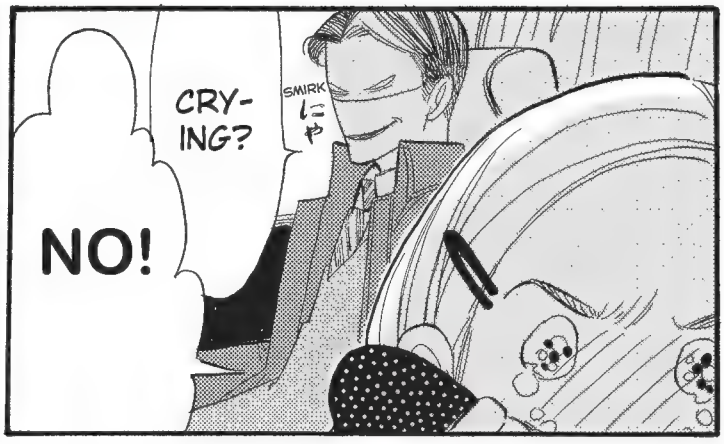
IT'S VERY OBVIOUS, AND VERY UN-PLEAS-ANT.
WELL, YOU AREN'T TEACHING HIM ANYTHING.
WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO ACHIEVE?
YOU THINK IT'LL BRING YOUR FATHER BACK TO LIFE?

HE'S GOT NO TECH-NIQUE, LOOKS COM-PLETELY DIFFER-ENT...
!
MAYBE IT WAS JUST A ONE-TIME THING...
BUT...
THE... AIR IN THAT ROOM WAS PURE SUKEROKU.

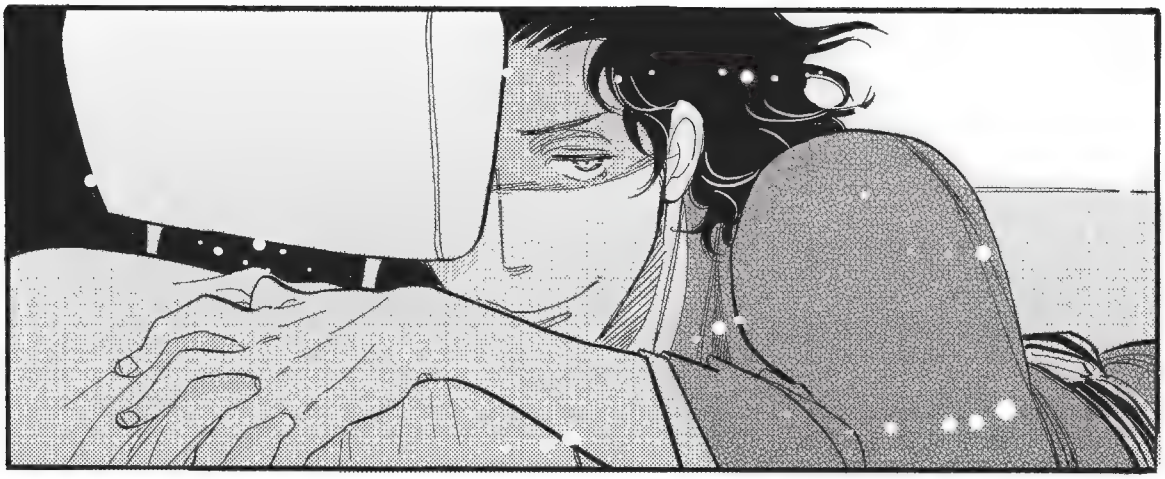
YOU THOUGHT SO TOO, DIDN'T YOU?
I USED TO WONDER WHY I TOOK YOTARO IN...

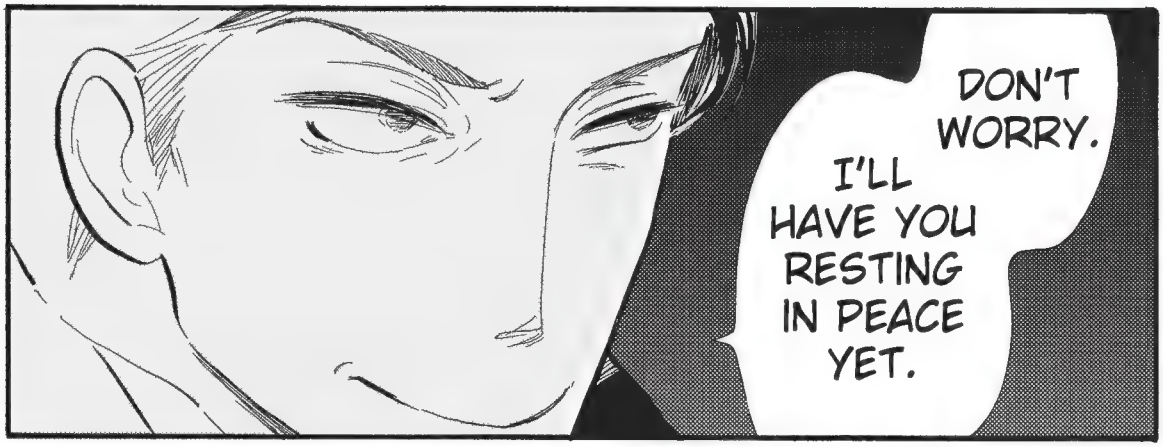
I KEEP GETTING PULLED IN BY THE SAME GUY.
MAYBE IT'S DESTINY OR SOME-THING.

Talking's my job!
Put a sock in it!


NO!
CRY-ING?
SMIRK
にや

Hhm





Continued in volume 2

## Sources

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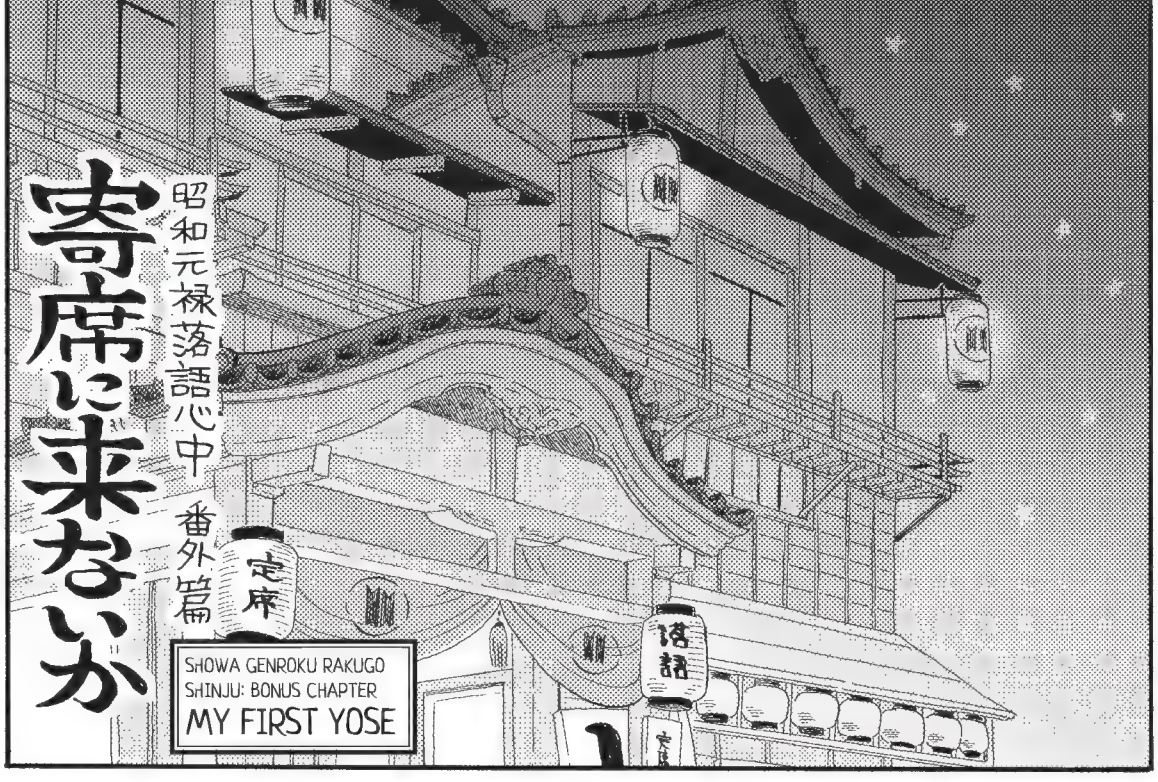
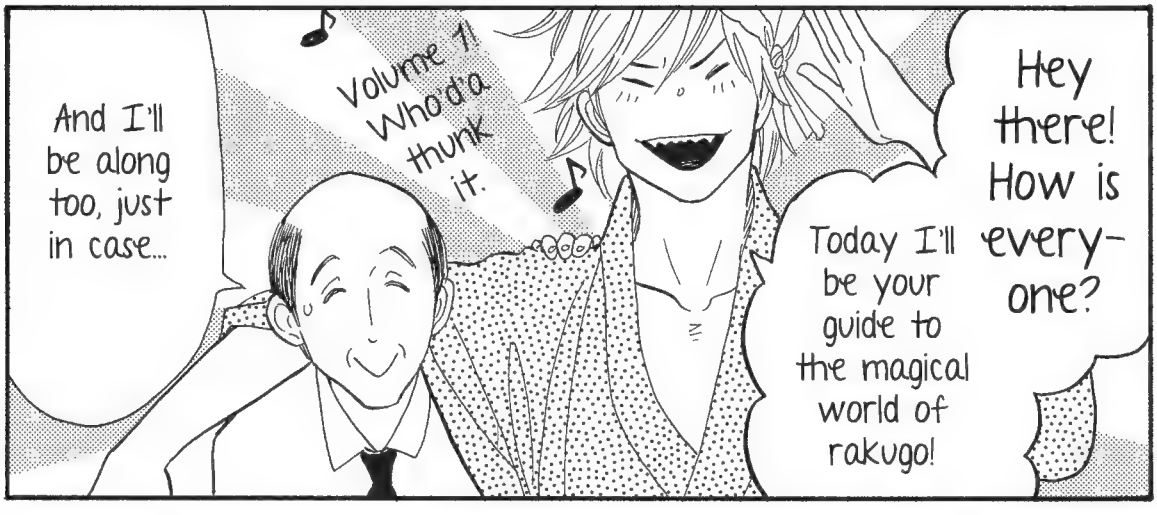
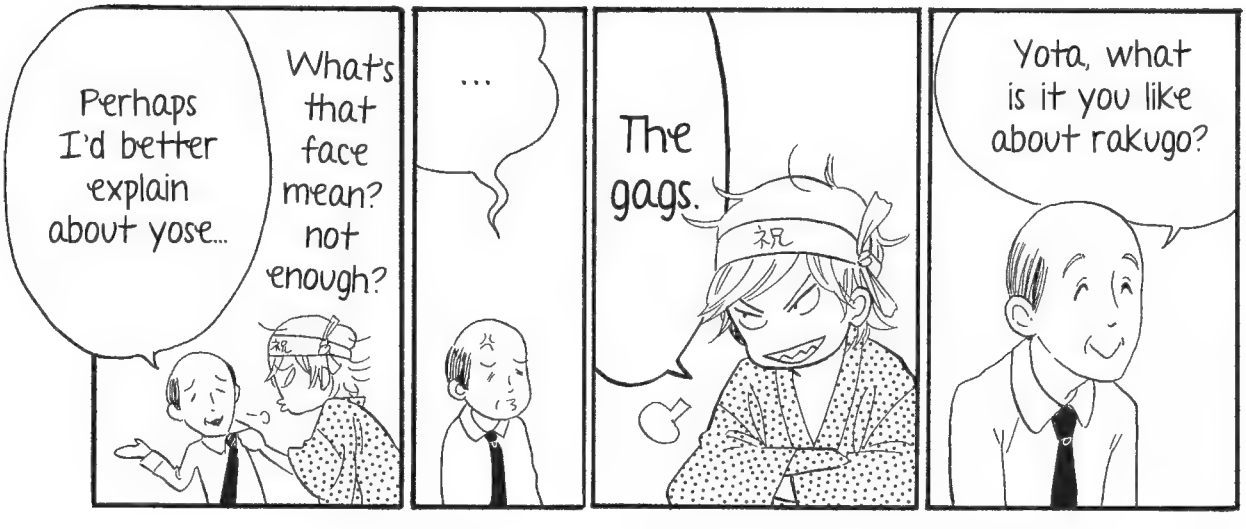
*Utsukushii Rakugo no Kotoba* (The beautiful language of rakugo): Aspect
*Rakugo no Sekai* (The world of rakugo): Kawade Shobo Shinsha
*Rakugoka Ron* (On rakugo artistry): Chikuma Shobo
*Rakugo Hyakusen: Natsu* (100 rakugo stories: Summer): Chikuma Shobo


昭和元禄落語心中
番外篇
寄席に来ないか
定席
落語
SHOWA GENROKU RAKUGO SHINJU: BONUS CHAPTER
MY FIRST YOSE


Hey there! How is everyone?
Today I'll be your guide to the magical world of rakugo!
Volume 1! Who'd'a thunk it.
And I'll be along too, just in case...


Yota, what is it you like about rakugo?
The gags.
...
What's that face mean? not enough?
Perhaps I'd better explain about yose...

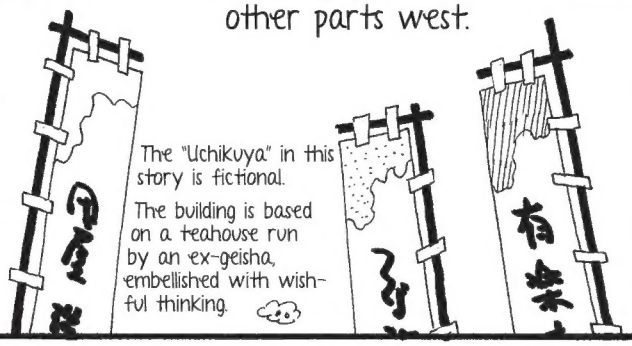
# 寄席とは？

WHAT IS A YOSE?

How to visit a yose
Starring Yotaro
Yose time!
1. Decide to go
Okay.
One, please.
2. Go whenever you like and buy a ticket (valid that day only)
Sit where you like for as long as you like.
3. Walk right in (mid-show is fine)
it's easier than a movie!
Later
4. Leave whenever you want

The great thing about a yose is, you can go and listen to rakugo whenever you want!

A yose is a place where you can see rakugo almost every day. In 2011, there were four in Tokyo, and others in Nagoya and other parts west.



The "Uchikuya" in this story is fictional.

The building is based on a teahouse run by an ex-geisha, embellished with wishful thinking.

# 寄席の味わい方

HOW TO ENJOY A YOSE

As the rakugo artists say, "Disengage brain before entering."

These are the attitudes that make a yose fun!

"The only thing dumber than paying to laugh is thinking that paying to laugh is dumb."

"A good audience is happy to love even a half-baked zenza's performance."

# 寄席の醍醐味

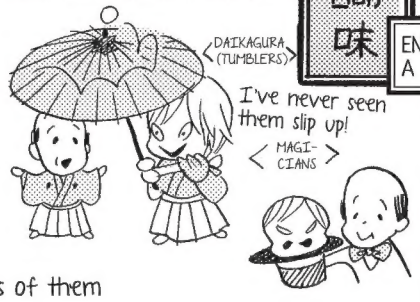
ENJOYING A YOSE?

## ≪SNACKS≫

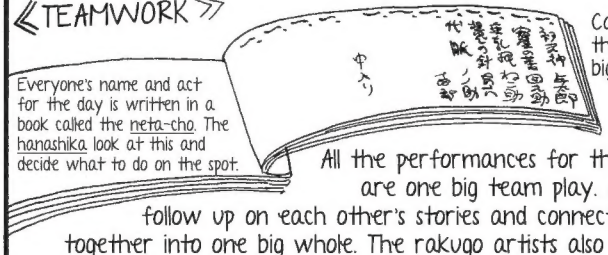
In some places, you can eat and drink while you watch. Some even have kiosks. It adds to the festive mood. Of course, you have to mind your manners. Nothing too noisy or smelly that would bother others.

## ≪IROMONO≫

These are little acts that perform between the rakugo stories. It's lots of fun. They're all great at working a crowd and know all sorts of things. And lots of them are cute, too.




## ≪TEAMWORK≫


Can't get this in a big hall.
Everyone's name and act for the day is written in a book called the neta-cho. The hanashika look at this and decide what to do on the spot.

All the performances for the day are one big team play. Artists follow up on each other's stories and connect it all together into one big whole. The rakugo artists also do an amazing job responding to what the iromono do.

Source: Izure Wagami Mo (Me too, one day) by Takehiro Irokawa (Chuko Bunko); Zatsugaku Sanpun Visual Zukai: Rakugo (Three-minute trivia in diagrams: Rakugo) by Sanyutei Enka (PHP). Both great books!

The point is, everyone at a yose is cool!

祝

You can learn a lot at a yose (including lots of irrelevant stuff). For example, how to hold a Japanese kiseru pipe with style, the flirtiest way to chat someone up, how to dress with panache, what a dodoitsu is, and how to be nasty.

Most of all, the more you go, the more fun you'll have. You're sure to find rakugo artists and iromono you like, and when you start going to see them, you'll start to recognize more and more of them, learn more about Edo, and get more and more hooked.

Rakugo artists are indeed cool, but they're much too humble to admit it. So we have to make sure to tell them!

LUCKY US

Shisho Yakumo says things like this in our story, but it's is pure fiction. As of 2011, rakugo is still very much alive and full of colorful characters.

SNEEEER

This is the end of rakugo.

Kkojin Tokubetsu Henshu: Rakugo Nyumon (Ikkojin special edition: Introduction to rakugo): KK Bestsellers

Comprehensive overview of the whole rakugo scene.Books by performers (all of 'em) They're all interesting, so check them out!

Here are a few good books about rakugo for beginners.

AND FINALLY

御礼

THANKS

And everyone reading this right now

Everyone who read the book at Itan

Nao and Bashi for help with art

Tomizawa, Itan Editing Team

You owe it to yourself not to miss out!

宮床に来こりゃ!

Rakugo brings the deeply iki (cool, stylish, elegant) world of the Edo townsmen to vivid life, and it's so easy to enjoy!

THANK YOU!

Haruko Kumoda

See you next volume!

**Descending Stories 1**

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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